



HELEDD FYCHAN MS

Member of the Senedd for South Wales Central



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This newsletter is an opportunity to update you on my work and some of the issues I have been raising in the Senedd and across the region in June and July.

Last week was our last week in the Senedd chamber until September. It was a busy week, and fiery at times, mainly as I and my fellow members from Plaid Cymru tried to get answers from the Government on a number of important issues before the recess began. One of those issues was food over the school holidays for children and young people who are eligible to receive free school meals. Over the past few years, the Welsh Government has provided food for the children and young people but unfortunately, there is no provision this summer. Although some of the plans they will run are expected to reach around 40,000 pupils, there will be a huge gap, as around 92,000 pupils between the ages of 5 and 15 are eligible for free school meals.

A number of local food banks and charities are extremely concerned, as the Government has not communicated this to them or implemented a plan in terms of how to ensure that food is available, and also that families know how to access it. I will continue to seek clarification as soon as possible. I am extremely proud that Plaid Cymru, through the Cooperation Agreement, has succeeded in securing free school lunches for all primary-age children during term time, especially after the Labour Party repeatedly voted to reject this. They must now prioritise extending this to all school holidays and also to secondary schools. So, even though the Senedd is not sitting, there is plenty of work to be done over the coming weeks and months. I am looking forward to visiting many local community projects and groups, along with national organisations. I will also have some time off with my family, but members of my team will remain available during that time to help anyone who needs support.

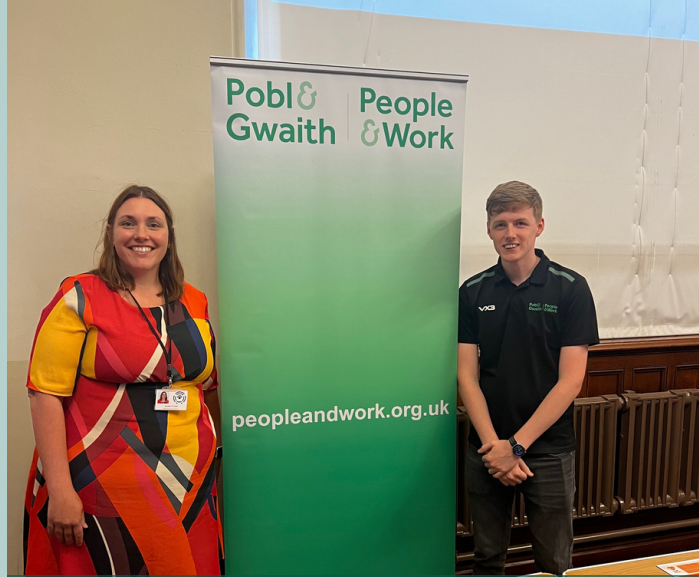
In our community

Over the past two months, I have had the pleasure of meeting with several community groups and organisations across South Wales Central. It has been inspiring to hear about the great work going on in our community, and I am always honoured to be able to support and visit these groups and projects.

Some key highlights include attending Cowbridge's Pride celebrations, supporting Peter Lea Primary School's petition for a new youth centre in Fairwater, attending the proclamation ceremony of the national Eisteddfod, which is coming to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024, and participating in Ras Yr Iaith with local schools to celebrate the Welsh language with Menter Iaith.

If you would like me to visit a group or business in your area or if you need advice, please do not hesitate to get in touch. You can learn more about my visits across the region on my website.

To all the volunteers and community groups in the region, thank you for all the great work you do in our community. I look forward to supporting and visiting more organisations and projects in the future.



Celebrating the success of People in Work at the llechi, Glo a Chefn Gwlad event in the Senedd



Welcoming Merched y Wawr Pontypridd to the Senedd

Merched y Wawr Pontypridd visited the Senedd recently. It was great to see so many familiar faces, and have an opportunity to discuss how the Senedd works as well as my work as a Member of the Senedd.

If you would like to visit the Senedd, please visit the website to find out about all the fantastic events taking place over the summer. It's your building, and you can visit anytime the building is open to the public without booking in advance. You can also book tours via the Senedd website, with one of the expert guides. Educational visits for schools are also available.



Celebrating 15 years of Wales as a Fair-Trade Nation!

July marks 15 years since Wales became the world's first Fair Trade Nation!

This achievement is testimony to the hard work and dedication of everyone who has supported Fair Trade in Wales and beyond. By choosing Fair Trade products, we can all help support workers in developing countries and promote sustainable and ethical practices. Let's continue to spread the word about Fair Trade and work towards a more just and equitable world.

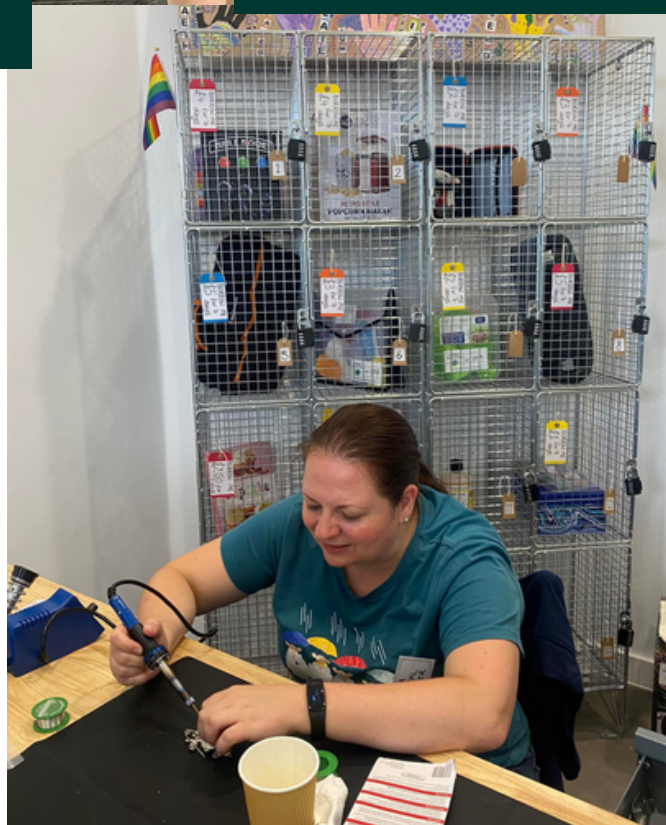


Celebrating Community Action

It was great to attend the launch of planet Ponty at Yma in Pontypridd. It's amazing to see what can happen when a community comes together to make positive change.

Pontypridd Repair Cafe was first started by Hayley Richards several years ago with the support of lots of community volunteer fixers, and community venues such as St Catherine's Church, Clwb y Bont and Pontypridd Museum as a project of Friends of the Earth Pontypridd. During lock down conversations between FoE Pontypridd and Artis Community saw Hannah Patricia Hitchins, now of Growing Space Pontypridd secure funding for Planed Ponty with help from my team. You can bring your broken items to be fixed or borrow something from the library of things. Find out more about volunteer opportunities and workshops through the link below.

www.planedpontyplanet.org.uk



Celebrating the successes of Wales Deaf Rugby teams

On July 11th, there was an opportunity to welcome the Wales men's and women's Rugby teams to the Senedd.

Earlier this year, the two teams won the World Deaf Rugby Sevens Cup in Argentina. An incredible achievement and definitely worth celebrating. Congratulations to all the players as well as the coaches.



Working for you

Since the beginning of May we had the privilege of doing case work for 34 people in the area. It was very clear that our questionnaire about the learning experiences of children and young people with additional learning needs caught the attention of many people. 10 of these cases were related to examples of children not being able to get suitable education and support, and the struggle parents have to try to advocate on their behalf. We were also asked to appeal to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council not to relocate a small group of children and force them to change schools as part of the Council's plans to reorganize the specialist classes for children with autism.

Around 150 letters were received this month about all kinds of issues discussed in parliament. Several individuals wrote to me about the additional living costs that affect disabled people - as much as £975 more than the costs of a person without a disability in some cases. Several people have also been in touch about the Welsh Government's cuts to the funding for Free Meals in the holidays and I have challenged this in the Senedd.



Meeting with the Hedgehog Helpline in the Senedd.

Have your Say:

The Children, Young, People and Education Committee in the Senedd have launched an inquiry looking at if disabled and neurodivergent children and young people have equal access to education and nursery. If you are a Parent, Carer or Teacher please respond to the consultation to help us improve policy in Wales. Click the link below for more information

<https://bit.ly/ALNaccessstoeducation>



Summer Tea with the All-Wales Cancer Community in the Senedd



Taff Ely food bank and support for families



I recently visited Taff-Ely Foodbank and had the opportunity to meet with Andrew and his dedicated team of volunteers. During our meeting, we discussed the challenges that the foodbank faces in meeting the high demand for their services. It was heart-breaking to hear about the devastating impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having on people of all ages, and how many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet with this likely to get worse over the summer holidays.

It is a sad reality that foodbanks have become a necessity, but we are fortunate that organisations like Taff-Ely Foodbank exist to provide support to those in need. If you can donate to your local foodbank, please do so. Or if you are struggling and need food, please reach out for help. You are not alone, and support is available.

Do Children and Young people with additional learning needs have equal access to education?

This is the question being asked by the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Senedd. To best represent the views and experiences of families across South Wales Central, I'm asking residents to take a few minutes to complete my survey and share your experiences.

If you or someone you know has a child or young person with additional learning needs, I would like to hear from you. I have been overwhelmed by the number of responses we have received so far. It's great to see so many people sharing their experiences. Your feedback will be vital in helping us to understand the current situation and identify areas where we can improve access to education for children and young people with additional learning needs.



Have your say:

If you are a Parent or Carer please respond to the survey to help us improve policy in Wales. Click the link below for more information

<https://forms.gle/A6j1bG8WgerKBJzF9>

Plaid Cymru's New Leader Rhun ap Iorwerth

Recently, Rhun ap Iorwerth became the new leader of Plaid Cymru. It is an exciting time for the party, and I am confident that under his leadership, we will continue to make progress towards a fair and just Wales. As part of Rhun's new team, I am honoured to have been appointed as Plaid Cymru's spokesperson for Education, the Welsh Language and Culture, as well as the Senedd Group's Business Manager. I am looking forward to continuing some of my current duties as well as taking on some additional ones.

We have a strong Senedd team, ready to continue holding the Welsh Government to account and deliver for our communities through the Co-operation Agreement.

Mayor of Barry's Civic Service

On the 2nd July, I had the pleasure of attending the Mayor of Barry's Civic Service at Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc.

It was a wonderful occasion, made all the more special as this year's Mayor is Councillor Dr Ian Johnson who was a colleague of mine when we both worked for the Plaid Cymru Members of Parliament in the Senedd. Ian works tirelessly to support his community, and is a brilliant advocate for the Barry.



Meeting with engineering students at Coleg y Cymoedd with new leader of Plaid Cymru



Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Rhondda Cynon Taf 2024

Next year, the National Eisteddfod is coming to Rhondda Cynon Taf. On the 24th of June, the official proclamation took place in a wonderful ceremony in Aberdare. It was such a joyful occasion, and was the perfect start to what will be a busy year between now and the Eisteddfod itself. A highlight for me, apart from seeing all the colourful banners made by local schools, was hearing Lloyd Macey perform a new and original song written by him for the occasion.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved with the Eisteddfod, as well as fundraising. For more information, please visit the Eisteddfod website. You can also get in touch with me, and I will signpost you to local fundraising groups as well as different events taking place. One such event coming up is a bilingual quiz in Clwb y Bont on the 27th July at 8pm. All are welcome!



Celebrating 75 years of the NHS in Wales

Earlier this month I joined Senedd Members in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the NHS to pay tribute to the dedicated frontline staff who have provided invaluable service and care throughout the years. The NHS was founded on the principle that healthcare should be accessible to all, regardless of background. Over the years, our healthcare heroes have displayed bravery, compassion, and resilience. They have faced personal sacrifices, especially during the pandemic, yet their dedication to our well-being has never wavered.

Plaid Cymru is committed to restoring trust between patients and our healthcare system by putting an end to chronic mismanagement. Our 5-point plan includes recruiting and retaining more doctors and nurses by offering fairer pay and better work conditions, making our NHS an attractive place to work. We will tackle waiting times by investing in social care, ensuring a seamless transition from health to social care. Preventative health measures will be prioritised, aiming to address health issues before they become severe, reducing the strain on our healthcare system. As we celebrate the incredible legacy of the NHS in Wales, we must do everything possible to support and champion our healthcare service to ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from the brilliant care of our National Health Service.



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