



HELEDD FYCHAN MS

Member of the Senedd for South Wales Central



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This newsletter provides an update about the work myself and my team have been working on in the Senedd and across the region in September.

We've been actively supporting the residents of the Rhondda with the ongoing traffic disruptions caused by the construction work on the Treherbert line and Maendy road bridge. I have also raised a number of issues that are important to residents such as greater support for communities at risk of flooding as well as supporting University of South Wales staff in their fight for fair pay.

As always, I remain committed to prioritising the issues that matter to you wherever you live in South Wales Central. These include better services for our communities, support for children and young people with additional learning needs, and more. If there are any other matters you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

In our Community

Over the past month, I had the pleasure of meeting with a number of constituents and organisations in the Senedd and across the region. I always enjoy meeting and hearing about the work they do in our communities.

Some of the highlights this month include joining staff at the University of South Wales on the picket line to support their fight for fair pay and meeting nurses working in my region, and hearing directly of the difficulties they face because of staff shortages. I also had the pleasure of attending a Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Senedd. It was a wonderful event with great company, all in support of a fantastic cause. I had the opportunity to connect with constituents, share stories, and raise awareness about the incredible work that Macmillan does to support people affected by cancer.

If you would like me to visit a group or business in your area or if you need any advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can learn more about my visits across the region on my [website](#).



Raising money for the Eisteddfod 2024

With the National Eisteddfod coming to Rhondda Cynon Taf, and specifically to Pontypridd in August 2024, we have a target to raise money locally. As part of a number of activities, I and several other people locally will be undertaking ten walking challenges throughout the county. This past weekend I did my first walk in Ynysybwl walking 6 miles with local Councillors Paula Evans and Amanda Ellis, and others. Future walks are due to take place over the coming months if you would like to get involved, learn more or donate visit my page here:

www.heleddfychan.wales/her_gerdded



Happy Birthday to club y Bont

Clwb y Bont in Pontypridd turned 40 in September. Clwb has faced challenge after challenge in recent years, between flooding and covid, but is now back and stronger than ever. Congratulations to everyone that's contributed to its success over the decades and who continue to work to support its future.



Discussing the Length of the School day

It was an honour to take part in a discussion recently organised by the Welsh Youth Parliament about the length of the school day. It was a lively and interesting discussion, with some very strong opinions voiced – both for and against.

The consultation is currently underway and people of all ages can have their say here: [Education and the School Curriculum \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales/education-and-the-school-curriculum).



Impact of Construction Works in the Rhondda

Over the past month I have been meeting with residents and businesses in Treorchy and Ton Pentre who have been facing significant challenges due to ongoing construction works. The combination of work on the Treherbert line and roadworks, including the Maindy Road bridge, has resulted in disruptions and chaos for the local community. One of the key issues raised was the poor communication with residents and businesses by those responsible for the works. The fact everything is taking place at the same time, rather than phased, is also creating chaos. Pupils are late to school, people are missing medical appointments and being late to work and businesses are losing thousands of pounds worth of trade. The need for support and assistance for both residents and businesses is evident. I will keep asking questions and pushing for answers and solutions. I'll also keep everyone updated as I receive any information or responses to questions asked.

If you are affected by the works, and need support or if you have questions, please email me - Heledd.Fychan@Senedd.Cymru or ring the team via 01443 853214.



ALN survey findings

Over the past two years I have seen a sharp increase in constituents who have approached me asking to help advocate for a suitable education for their child. These calls for help have come from parents whose children have an Additional Learning Need. The stories I hear are often heartbreaking tales of frustration and perseverance in fighting for the right of children and young people.

The Senedd's Children and Young People's Committee are conducting an investigation to find out if disabled and neurodiverse children and young people have equal access to education and childcare. A survey was shared to make sure the voices of families in my region are heard I conducted a survey to gather views of parents and children. I have now submitted a report outlining the findings to the Senedd.

Some of the clearest messages I heard from parents and carers were:

1. Parents and families believe that all staff working in schools should receive basic level of training on neurodiversity (and specialist training for ALN practitioners and Teaching Assistants)
2. Many children and young people need more support and tailored additional learning provision than they receive according to parents and carers.
3. Children and young people are waiting far too long for diagnostic assessments, and this should be addressed urgently.



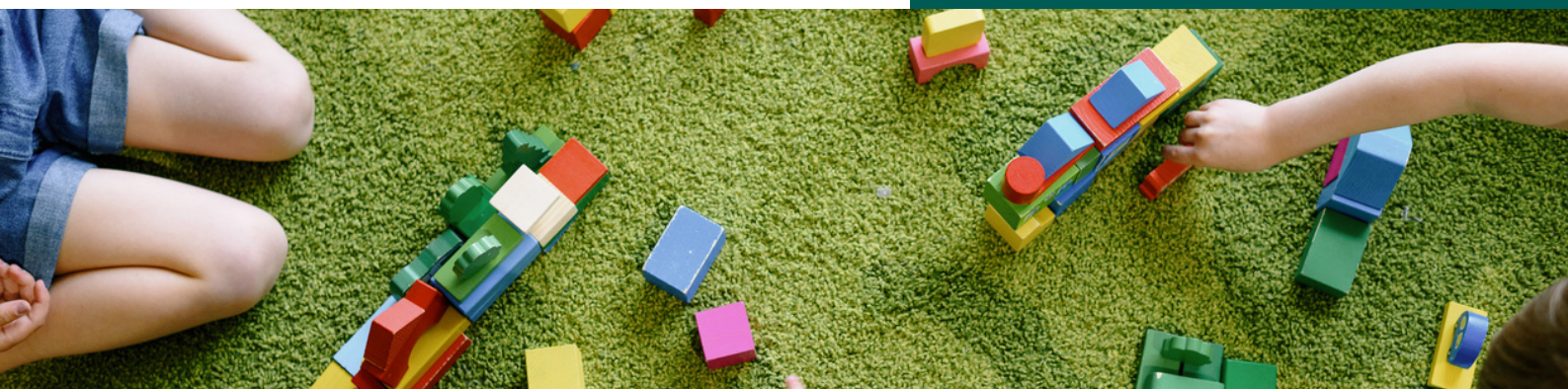
Want to learn more?

Want to learn more about the work of the Children, Young people and Education committee in the Senedd click the link [here](#).

The next meeting will be on the 12th of October where we will discuss issues such as:

- Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?
- Services for looked after children: exploring radical reform

You can watch the meeting live by clicking [here](#).



Response to school closures in Wales following concerns over RAAC.

Ynys Mon Council recently closed two schools temporarily due to safety concerns regarding the potential presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), a potentially hazardous material. The health and safety of students and staff are paramount and further assessments are underway.

It is concerning that the scale of the problem across Wales is currently unknown. The UK Government's delay in sharing evidence with the Welsh Government may have put the safety of children, young people, and staff at risk. The Welsh Government must act decisively to mitigate this risk.

The UK Government has a duty to release new funds for schools in Wales to make repairs. Despite this, no new funding has been announced.

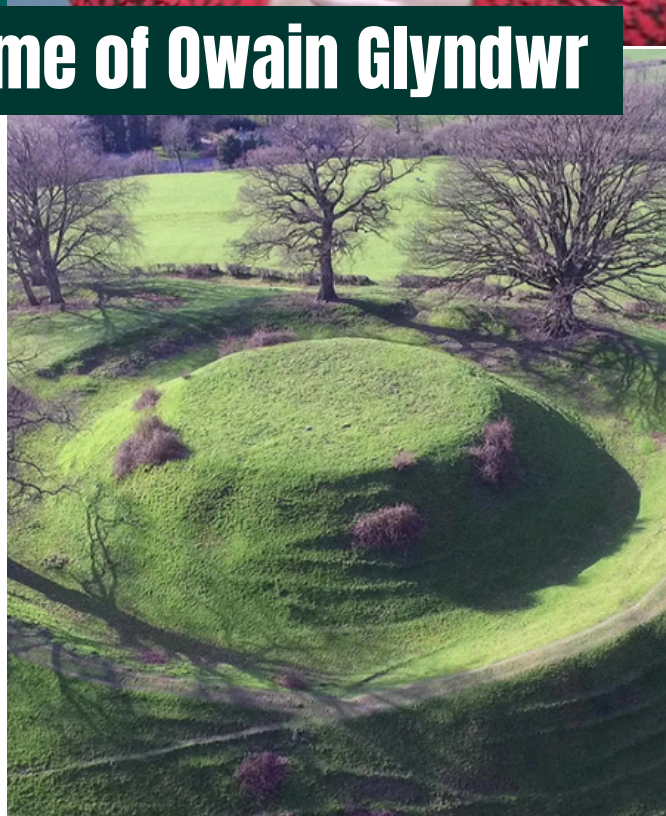
There have been no reports of RAAC found in schools across South Wales Central as of yet. However, St David's Hall in Cardiff is affected and is currently closed whilst further inspections take place. I will continue to monitor the situation and keep residents informed of any updates.



Safeguarding Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndwr

In the Senedd this past month we discussed an important petition calling for the preservation of Sycharth, the historical site of Owain Glyndŵr's home. I am grateful to Elfed and the 10,539 individuals who have supported this petition. It is inspiring to see the passion for preserving our cultural heritage.

Unfortunately, sites like Sycharth have been overlooked and forgotten. Despite claims from the Welsh Government, it is evident that Sycharth has been neglected and its significance is not celebrated or promoted. I was extremely critical of the way Cadw, and the Welsh Government have neglected the site, along with a number of other important historical sites here in Wales. This will be an ongoing campaign, to right this wrong. Watch the debate in full [here](#).



Calling for greater support for communities at risk of flooding

On Tuesday 13th September, Professor Elwen Evans KC's independent review of local government section 19 and Natural Resources Wales reports into extreme flooding in the winter of 2020 and 2021 was debated in the Senedd.

Secured by Plaid Cymru as part of the Cooperation Agreement, the review is an important step to improve how flood risk management, including the response to flooding instances and their aftermath, is delivered across Wales.

Having consistently called for an independent inquiry into the floods, I welcome the report and thank Professor Elwen Evans KC for leading this work. I'm also pleased that I was able to submit evidence to the review and would like to thank everyone that contacted me as part of this work and allowed me to share their personal experiences of flooding. The review highlights many of the issues that I and residents have been raising for years, so I'm pleased to see that it acknowledges the ineffectiveness of the section 19 process and the need for it to be redesigned.

Though the report offers potential solutions for the future, many communities continue to have unanswered questions about the events of 2020. I will continue to fight for answers, so that lessons are learnt and all communities that remain at risk receive the answers, support and investment they need and deserve.



Contact Heledd

- 01443 853214
- Heledd.Fychan@Senedd.Cymru
- 2 High Street, Pontypridd, CF37 1QJ
- Heledd Fychan AS / MS
- @Heledd_Plaid
- @Heledd_Plaid



Evidence for the independent review of local government section 19 and Natural Resources Wales reports into extreme flooding

