
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2015



RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Building upon its expertise over many years concerning the care of asylum seekers and refugees, Cytûn has played a crucial role over the past two weeks in preparing to receive more displaced people to Wales, particularly from Syria. Cytûn's CEO, Aled Edwards, serves as Chair of the Home Office funded [Wales Strategic Migration Partnership](#) and in that role has been active in bringing faith groups and other third sector organisations together strategically, giving advice and support to local authorities and contributing to the Welsh Government's taskforce set up to oversee the arrival of relocated Syrian refugees. With



colleagues from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Aled also visited the Idomeni bottleneck on the border between Greece and Macedonia (pictured), where thousands of refugees flow through daily, and held conversations with the UK Ambassador to Greece and UNHCR leaders in the region. The visit was covered extensively by the Welsh media and CTBI is in the process of preparing an update. A full Welsh update will be posted on the Cytûn website (www.cytun.org.uk) during the next few days informing churches concerning the most recent developments and signposting pertinent advice on how to help. Please feel free to contact Aled directly (aled@cytun.org.uk) for further details. Working in this arena is currently Cytûn's most pressing priority.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN WALES

Since the announcement in July by the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, that Religious Education in schools in Wales is to be replaced by Religion, Philosophy and Ethics as part of the new *Humanities* area of study in the National Curriculum proposed by the [Donaldson Report](#) (see the Summer Policy Bulletin), many churches and other faith organisations have been in correspondence with the minister.

In reply, Mr Lewis has reaffirmed the important role of faith organisations in education in Wales, and has promised full consultation on this proposal along with all the other curriculum reforms. The Minister is launching this consultation programme at the National Education Conference in Cardiff on 22nd October. The conference is fully booked, but you can register for free as a web participant here - <http://www.ca15ec.glasgows.co.uk/>

CYTÛN CHURCHES IN DIALOGUE REGARDING HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

In consultation with our member churches and other bodies, Cytûn has responded to a series of Welsh Government consultations regarding historic places of worship and a possible procedure for community asset transfer (see the [Summer 2015 Policy Bulletin](#)). Copies of the responses may be obtained from Gethin Rhys (see page 6).

During September and October, Cytûn is co-ordinating a series of meetings with the Welsh Government and with AMs who have an interest in these matters to see if there are ways in which the [Historic Environment \(Wales\) Bill](#) and its attached guidance and strategies can be changed to strengthen the partnership between Government and churches to allow for both the preservation of key historic places of worship, and the continued use of as many such places as possible for worship and for the benefit of the community.

ALCOHOL MINIMUM PRICING

The Welsh Government is [consulting](#) on setting a minimum price for the sale of alcohol in Wales. The Salvation Army was represented at the consultation launch. As the consultation continues until December, there is plenty of time for other churches and individuals to respond. Progressing the legislation will depend on the outcome of a European Court case against similar legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2012. An initial opinion was offered by the court on 3rd September, and you can read an analysis of the significance of this case on the Alcohol Policy UK website [here](#).

THE WALES WE WANT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Informed by a series of engagement events and discussion documents earlier in the year, the Welsh Government has developed [draft statutory guidance for public bodies](#) subject to the **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015**. The guidance is open for consultation until 16th November 2015. A draft list of national indicators will also be published shortly to help us know whether progress is being made in achieving the seven well-being goals.

There will be four [consultation events](#) on the following dates: **22 October** | Swansea
23 October | Cardiff **28 October** | Newtown **04 November** | Llandudno

The morning sessions will be for the public bodies directly affected. Other stakeholders will be able to participate in consultation events in the afternoon. Cytûn hopes to be represented at one of these events, and anyone with comments to offer should send them to Gethin (see back page) by **20th October**, please.

ORGAN DONATION IS CHANGING IN WALES

If you want to be an organ donor you can register a clear decision to be a donor (opt-in). Or, from 1st December 2015 you can still be an organ donor by doing nothing and having your consent deemed. **If you do not want to be an organ donor it is important that you register this decision** (opt-out), and everyone should ensure that family and loved ones know your organ donation decision.

More information can be found at: www.organdonationwales.org or from the NHS Organ Donor Helpline: 0300 123 23 23



The advertisement features a digital clock showing '01.12.2015'. To the right is the Welsh Government logo with the text 'Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government'. Below the clock is a black banner with white text: 'Nawr yw'r amser i wneud penderfyniad am roi organau It's time to make a choice about organ donation'. At the bottom right is the website 'www.llyw.cymru www.gov.wales'.

ARMED FORCES IN WELSH SCHOOLS

The Welsh Government has supported in principle more research into how the armed forces operate in secondary schools in Wales, although it has said it does not believe that the need for such research is *urgent*.

The formal response was the result of an investigation and [report by the Assembly's Petitions Committee](#) which called for further scrutiny *into the reasons for the unevenness of the armed forces visits to schools in Wales*.

The Welsh Government acknowledges *the unique nature of the armed forces as a career*. Other recommendations accepted by the Government include:

- Ensuring *'guidance in relation to inviting the armed forces into schools take account of their unique nature as a career and the need to encourage an open and honest exchange of views with pupils about their role'*.
- *'That a diverse range of business and employers visits schools to provide pupils with information about the career opportunities they offer'*.

Submissions to the Petitions Committee came from a wide range of individuals and organisations, including Cytûn members the Society of Friends, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and a number of individual Christians, as well as the former Children's Commissioner for Wales, Keith Towler.

An hour's debate about the report from the Petitions Committee and the Government's response, will be held on **Wednesday 30th September** at 3pm in plenary session.

RENTING HOMES IN WALES

The [Renting Homes \(Wales\) Bill](#), currently being considered by the Assembly, includes a raft of measures to simplify tenancy law in Wales. Most of its proposals are designed to clarify and simplify a complex area of law, and the Government's [Explanatory Memorandum](#) says "The proposals will not fundamentally alter the balance of rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords that currently exists." (para 30).

The Bill proposes to introduce new 'fitness for human habitation' standards and includes measures to prevent 'retaliatory evictions' by landlords against tenants who complain about the condition of a property.

However, a number of AMs and housing charities are arguing against one part of the Bill. All renters currently have six months' protection from eviction at the start of their tenancy – the so-called 'six month moratorium'. The Bill proposes to do away with the moratorium. It also proposes to remove tenants' rights to appeal against extortionate rent rises.

[Shelter](#) has said that "The Renting Homes Bill, as currently drafted, will give Wales the most insecure private rented sector in the whole of Western Europe. Wales will become a magnet for rogue landlords. And it will be the poorest and most vulnerable tenants who will suffer the worst impacts." Shelter has, in partnership with British Gas, Welsh Tenants, Let Down Wales, the Wallich and others launched #MakeRentingRightCymru, calling on the Assembly to amend the current draft so that it increases the security of private tenants in Wales. They say, "Wales should introduce secure tenancies for all which give longer term security to families and create stable neighbourhoods."

Many amendments to the Bill have been tabled by the Government and by individual AMs, which will be considered by the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee on 30th September and 8th October.

Meanwhile, Shelter is holding a conference in Merthyr Tydfil on [Preventing Homelessness](#) on 29th September 2015.

HUMAN RIGHTS TOUR

The British Institute of Human Rights is holding community education and debate days across the UK between 2-16 October, as part of the 15 Days of Action to mark the 15th Anniversary of the **Human Rights Act 1998**, which the Westminster Government elected in 2015 is committed to replacing with a British Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

The BIHR says that its Human Rights Tour is a unique, but much-needed, space for the community to come together and find out more about what the Human Rights Act is, what it means for each of us and our democracy, and what the future holds for the protection of universal human rights here at home. BIHR's Human Rights Tour provides an opportunity for people to find out more, get informed and to be heard. There are full-day, half-day and evening events, and days just for young people.

The Tour will be in Colwyn Bay on 5 October with BIHR's local partner, the North Wales Police Force, as well as a Young People's event in Swansea on 14 October with Swansea YMCA. You can find out more information, including booking your FREE place, here. If you would like to chat to BIHR you can contact Richard or Woody on 0207 882 5850 / tour@bihr.org.uk or via twitter @BIHRhumanrights.

ASK THE FIRST MINISTER



The **Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister** is meeting in **Swansea** on **October 16th at 10.30am** at the National Waterfront Museum. The main topic will be 'Wales in the Wider World, covering such areas as:

- What is the Welsh Government's overall strategy for marketing and promoting Wales to the world?
- What is the Welsh brand? How well are Welsh attractions promoted to tourists?
- Does the Welsh Government do enough to draw in investors?
- Does the Welsh Government do a good job of making Wales seem appealing to tourists from the UK and abroad?
- Is Welsh culture visible enough outside of Wales?
- What markets or products should be prioritised?

Questions, observations or comments can be submitted to the Committee on Twitter @AssemblyWales #AskFirstMin; on the [Assembly's Facebook Page](#); by e-mail to: FM.Scrutiny@Assembly.Wales, on You Tube (by linking to one of the above) or on the [Senedd Instagram account](#). The Chair, David Melding AM, will then select some questions and incorporate them into the line of questioning for the First Minister, Carwyn Jones. You can come and watch the meeting in person, online on [Senedd.TV](#) or read [the transcript](#)



MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR CARERS

Cytûn has been in discussion with Carers Wales regarding co-operating on policy issues, and with regard to how Carers Wales can support the many carers in local congregations.

Our loved ones are living longer with illness or disability, and more and more of us are looking after them. Whether round-the-clock or for a few hours a week, caring can have a huge effect on us, our lives and our plans. Caring for a loved one or friend can cut some people off from the outside world. It is hard to meet other people who know what they are going through and it is not always easy to find out what help is available.



Carers Wales is offering [training for carers and groups](#) on the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 which comes into force in April 2016.

Carers' Rights Day is on 20th November, and churches and faith groups are invited to mark the day. From a coffee morning to a benefits drop-in session or an information stand, there are loads of ways that your group can get involved. When you [sign up](#) you will be sent everything you need to get involved, and keep you up to date with the latest news, event ideas and resources through our Carers Rights Day email updates.

Carers Wales would be happy to meet with you and/or provide a talk to your group – including church and other faith groups. You can get in touch by emailing julie.skelton@carerswales.org For more information go to: <http://www.carersuk.org/wales>

#SayNoToAgeism

Cytûn is part of the Ageing Well in Wales project of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. On **October 1st**, the International Day of Older Persons, we are invited to tweet **I'm / We're supporting the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and saying NO to ageism #SayNoToAgeism** yourself, or by joining the Commissioner's Thunderclap: <https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/31460-say-no-to-ageism> Other ideas on taking part can be found at : <http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/ageism.aspx>

BUSES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Enterprise and Business Committee of the Assembly is currently looking into [Bus and Community Transport services in Wales](#). This includes looking at why passenger numbers are in decline, and whether further devolution of bus regulation to Wales would be beneficial. Follow the link to see how to submit evidence to the Committee by **21st October 2015**.

Meanwhile, the Welsh Government has introduced discounted bus travel for those aged 16-18 in Wales. Details can be found at <https://mytravelpass.gov.wales/en/>



FUTURE OF THE BBC

Cytûn is responding on behalf of churches in Wales to the [public consultation](#) on renewal of the BBC Charter. Gethin would like to hear from readers what they would like to see from the BBC and other

licence fee funded services (such as S4C) over the next ten years to help inform our response on your behalf. Please let us know by **30th September**.

ELECTIONS 2016

Cytûn has sent, on behalf of the Christian churches, suggestions to the main political parties who are contesting the 2016 Welsh Assembly elections for possible inclusion in their manifestos. These suggestions were drawn from recent consultations with our members on matters such as housing, broadcasting, equality and education. Copies can be obtained from Gethin (see below).

As the election approaches, we will be providing information about key policy areas and guidance on organising hustings with the candidates in your areas. We will also offer links to resources produced by our member churches and partners. Our suite of resources is being developed in partnership with our member churches. Further details will be included in the Policy Bulletin and on www.cytun.org.uk.



Safe Families for Children - Wales
Invites you to meet
Dr Dave Anderson
The Founder of
Safe Families for Children



SAVE THE DATE

Where? Bethel Baptist Centre, Pontyclun.
CF72 9AJ

When? Fri 16 October, 7.30-10pm

Tickets are FREE

To book tickets call 02921 660 555



www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/wales

SUNDAY TRADING

The Westminster Government has published a consultation on devolving some powers relating to Sunday trading to local authorities in England and Wales. Local authorities would have the power to extend Sunday trading hours, but not to shorten them. This may well remind older readers of the former local referendums regarding opening public houses in Wales on Sundays.

A number of churches in Wales responded from their own theological standpoints, and Cytûn responded on behalf of all our member churches saying that the proposed reorganisation of Welsh local government by 2020 made devolution of this kind inappropriate for Wales at present, and that full responsibility for Sunday trading regulations (not just the power to extend them) should be devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, which could then consult and decide whether to allow local authorities to act in this area.

We have received an assurance from the relevant Westminster minister that there will be further consultation with churches in Wales, and we are waiting to hear more about this.

CONTACTING THE CYTÛN POLICY OFFICER

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Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg. Happy to communicate in Welsh and English

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