



REAL POWER FOR THE PEOPLE OF WALES

Programme of the Welsh Communist Party

(Adopted at the Welsh Congress, Merthyr Tydfil, November 2022)

Y BLAID GOMIWNYDDOL
THE COMMUNIST PARTY



Real Power for the People of Wales

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WALES TODAY

Capitalist society is a class society where the relationship between workers and capitalists is based on the exploitation of labour power. In Wales today, this continues to generate huge inequalities and poverty for many, alongside enormous wealth for a few. This divided society fosters discrimination and provides a breeding ground for bigotry and xenophobia.

Wales faces severe economic crisis once again. The cost of living crisis is the latest example of the impact of capitalism, with millions of working-class people facing hardship as gas and electricity bills rocket and petrol prices rise along with food, mortgages, rents and rail fares. The OECD, World Bank and IMF have all revised their economic growth forecasts downwards, warning that many capitalist countries now face recession as central banks increase interest rates in an effort to combat inflation.

The Bank of England has admitted that we are heading towards a period worse than that of 1970s-style 'stagflation', one of high inflation combined with recession instead of stagnation. This follows years of austerity policies that have already held down wages and cut public services in the wake of capitalism's 2008 international financial crisis.

Household incomes in Wales are falling behind as a result of the deliberate policies of the Conservative government in Westminster and the Welsh administration's lack of powers and resources in Cardiff. People reliant on the benefits system have seen their incomes fall in real terms and many have even seen cash reductions as a result of the Tories' punitive welfare agenda.

The public sector, which employs almost one-third of the workforce in Wales (compared with one-quarter in Britain generally), has seen a pay freeze followed by tiny below-inflation rises. Most workers in private sector firms have fared just as badly. This is a race to reduce the standard of living of hundreds of thousands of workers, one in which the average weekly wage in Wales is £48 lower than the all-Britain average. On top of this, women experience a 9% gender pay gap for full-time workers of £51.70 a week below the average wage for male workers.

We support the demand of the Wales TUC that the Senedd should have the power to establish wages boards in notoriously low-pay industries in the economy such as accommodation and food services, residential care and retail and wholesale

Chronic problems of low pay should not be surprising in a system increasingly dominated by privatisation, casualisation and zero-hours contracts, where fire and re-hire (and even fire and replace) practices are just another weapon in the company arsenal, and where anti-trade union laws and measures to suppress public protests are the core of the Westminster regime's agenda.

In its determination to repeal the Senedd's 2017 Trade Union (Wales) Act, which protects trade union rights relating to industrial action, membership dues and facility time, the British government shows its contempt for both Wales and working people.

The capitalists argue that unemployment is necessary for a smoothly functioning labour market, but the consequence is human misery with 63,000 (September 2022) on the claimant count and a further 79,000 economically inactive people in Wales looking for work. With 69,000 children (13% of the total) living in workless households, it is clear that the capitalist 'market' is designed for anything but meeting human needs.

The 'market' is also the motor force in the drive to deplete the Earth's resources and usher in environmental disaster. Climate change is already a clear and present danger in Wales with increased disruption from flooding and the accelerating loss of vital habitats, species and biodiversity.

In common with the rest of Britain, we face a housing crisis of unparalleled proportions because the construction, sale and renting of homes is largely driven by the quest for profit. In a capitalist society, providing homes for people to live in is not the primary consideration. In Wales, too, local shortages of affordable housing are made all the worse by the proliferation of second homes, holiday lets and empty properties.

Our health and social care services are underfunded and face the constant threat of privatisation. The Covid pandemic continues to take a tremendous toll and waiting lists for even the most crucial medical services are spiralling out of control.

Substantial progress has been made in education in Wales by resisting the academisation and privatisation agenda imposed on England. Here, the curriculum reform and the national Welsh language strategy Cymraeg 2050 have placed more power in the hands of the educators rather than the bureaucrats. However, there is a great deal more to do to ensure adequate resourcing and to build the massive increase in capacity that is needed to ensure education through the medium of Welsh is a genuine choice open to learners across Wales.

In the mass media, the main press and broadcasting corporations are owned or controlled from outside Wales and as such is overwhelmingly London-centric. Funding for Welsh content is wholly inadequate and our culture suffers alongside those who work to

produce it. Wales needs the powers and resources to fight back but the trend is in the wrong direction. The UK Internal Market Act (2020) removed the Welsh government's post-Brexit control over subsidies to industry and empowered the British government to fund projects that fall within devolved areas of policy-making. The overall effect of the legislation is to limit the extent to which the Welsh Senedd and government can restructure the Welsh economy in the interests of the people of Wales. The UK Internal Market Act is a direct threat to devolution and a straitjacket we must fight to throw off.

While the Welsh government can continue to grant small-scale financial aid to small businesses through the Wales Development Bank and other programmes, it has neither the powers nor the capital funds to assist large companies on a significant scale such as for example, Tata Steel in Port Talbot. This is particularly serious because large companies (employing 250 workers or more) play a bigger part in the Welsh economy's private sector than is the case in the UK as a whole, accounting for 61% of company turnover compared with 50% in the UK. Many small and medium- sized enterprises depend heavily as contractors and suppliers on their links with big companies.

Furthermore, what survives of the British Tory government's 'Levelling Up' agenda seeks to impose a model based on handouts of

public money to big business which undermines democratic local government and promotes the privatisation of public services.

The Labour Party with support from Plaid Cymru is in office in Cardiff Bay. But the labour movement and progressive forces are not in power. The Welsh government needs to embrace an agenda that puts workers' rights, employment, higher wages, equality and public ownership and planning front and centre.

Unless we unshackle the trade union movement, end the persecution of community protest groups and place decision-making power in the hands of ordinary people, we cannot effectively tackle the big issues that matter.

Within Wales, many forces seek to challenge inequalities, call out bigotry, and foster understanding and collective endeavour for the common good. The Communist Party recognises the role that the capitalist system plays in thwarting even the best-intentioned programmes of government and campaigns. We clearly see the economic basis of the contradiction between well-intentioned reforms and persistent unequal outcomes, because we recognise the class conflict that underlies the policy debates on issues encompassing the whole of political, civic and cultural life.

As revolutionaries, Communists ask themselves, 'What can be done to bring these contradictions to a head?' How can these contradictions be resolved in favour of the great majority? In

common with all progressives, we ask: what can we do today to relieve immediate suffering? What can we do to improve the material conditions of the people today? And how can we ensure that the daily struggles build towards the wider goal of wresting power from the hands of the capitalist class and placing it in the hands of the working class and the people generally?

Our programme seeks to answer those questions. In this updated edition, we call for the construction of an anti-monopoly alliance to challenge the capitalist elites.

The trade unions have demonstrated their determination—backed by the Wales TUC—to fight for better wages, terms and conditions against a renewed anti-working class, anti-union offensive by the Tory central government in league with big business. The People's Assembly—backed by trades unions—and other anti-cuts and campaigning organisations can play a major part in mobilising people in their communities against attacks on public services, benefits and pensions. Broad-based local trades union councils are well-placed to act as a bridge between industrial action in the workplace and vigorous campaigning in working-class communities.

Furthermore, the Communist Party demands democratic controls in the economic sphere and an extension of democracy into the workplace.

Only through this extension of democratic class power can the interests of the people

triumph over the profit motive, enabling our communities to direct investment into their chosen priorities, into public services and economic, social and cultural development.

We call for the reshaping of Britain through progressive federalism, committed to the redistribution of wealth and power.

**THE ROAD TO A SECURE,
SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIALLY
JUST WALES CAN BE BUILT
ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF
REAL POWER FOR THE
PEOPLE OF WALES!**



REAL POWER IN THE ECONOMY

The economy in Wales has developed mostly in a British and international context that has left a profound imprint today that cannot be ignored. While much can be done from within Wales to affect the course of future development, especially with sufficient powers and financial resources, that wider context has to be taken into account, not least the relationships between the Welsh, British, European and global economies.

Thus, for instance, Indian-owned Tata Steel in Port Talbot—one of the biggest direct and indirect employers in Wales—relies on the motor industry in the midlands and north-east of England as by far the biggest market for its exports; likewise, British Aerospace is a major employer in north-east Wales and, together with its operations in the south, is at the centre of vital clusters of supply companies, with much of the work funded

through contracts with the British government and international airlines. The important high-value manufacturing sector in Wales exports much of its output to France, the USA and the United Arab Emirates.

It is, therefore, directly in the interests of the working class and people of Wales that these vital links are recognised in any economic and political strategy for the future. In particular, this reality underlines both the importance of defending and expanding labour movement unity across Britain and internationally and the need for that movement to lead the struggle for left policies and state power at the all-Britain level as well as for political office in Wales.

We welcome the Welsh government's commitment to reduce income inequality and tackle its causes. However, it is recognised not only by Marxist economists and an increasing number of non-Marxists such as Thomas Piketty that ownership of capital—rather than simply income from work—is the major determinant of economic inequality. Neither Labour, Plaid Cymru nor the Greens advocate a mechanism for rectifying the unequal distribution of capital ownership.

The proliferation of economic, industrial and 'well-being' plans for Wales and their growing wish-lists expose the extent to which Wales lacks the powers, resources and agencies to influence the course of its own economic development.

The Communist Party's proposals for new public

enterprise and for the public acquisition of equity in existing enterprises challenge the structures that cause inequality, by remedying social democracy's great omission.

The Welsh Senedd needs the powers necessary to redevelop our national, regional and local economies: to provide state aid to industry, including the ability to take public shareholdings; to protect enterprises such as Newport Wafer Fab—Britain's biggest semiconductor plant—against central government threats to its existence on bogus, anti-China 'national security' grounds; to control public procurement; to secure comprehensive public ownership; to require ecologically sustainable and responsible investment; and to require trade union recognition and sectoral collective bargaining.

A top priority must be to boost capital investment in the transport, energy and housing sectors, where Wales falls substantially below the average UK level. Nor are the mechanisms and processes clear for securing future post-Brexit investment in R&D, despite the excellent potential that exists in the compound semiconductor, clean energy and biomedical industries in Wales.

Levels of funding through the HE Funding Council, UK Research Councils, R&D tax credits, Innovate UK and EU Framework Programmes have been significantly lower in Wales than in the UK as a whole. Our schools

and university colleges are not giving enough priority to the kinds of subjects, courses and research projects that will help produce a dynamic, technologically advanced and sustainable Welsh economy. The closest collaboration is needed between Welsh government, business, the education sector and the trade unions to develop a comprehensive R&D strategy for Wales and to secure the funding necessary from the public and private sectors.

The Welsh Communist Party therefore reiterates its call for a Welsh National Economic Development Authority—directly accountable to the Senedd—with the powers and resources to plan, coordinate and promote a balanced, productive and sustainable economy in the interests of the workers and people of Wales.

Funding such development will require replacing the Barnett formula (which currently determines the size of the central government's annual block grant to the Senedd) with a needs-based redistribution one that would distribute wealth more fairly between the nations and regions of Britain. It will also require Welsh government to have increased borrowing powers and the ability to challenge the constraints embedded in the UK Internal Market Act (2020).

Wales has a bigger share of its economy engaged in productive industry (manufacturing, energy, construction, water, agriculture and mining and quarrying) than the UK as a whole, whether by value-added or by employment. We generate twice as much electricity as we consume,

exporting the surplus to England, Ireland and other parts of Europe. Wales supplies England with 243bn litres of water annually, at cost.

It cannot be right, therefore, that average household disposable income in Wales is now only 80% of the UK average—down from 87% in 1997—while average gross weekly wages are 8% below.

Democratic economic planning

A new economic framework for Wales should operate to maximise the public benefit from public investment made with public money, in accordance with democratically decided national aims. The Communist Party believes these aims should be to:

- Eliminate poverty and meet the material needs of all citizens.
- Ensure all investment is environmentally sustainable and ecologically responsible.
- Empower workers to direct the work of the organisations that employ them, through trade union recognition and collective bargaining

An Economic Plan for Wales should draw together and integrate the multiplicity of sectoral plans already in existence in a democratic process involving Welsh and local government, business (notably through the industry forums recently established at the all-Wales level), political parties, the Wales TUC and trade unions and campaigning and pressure groups.

New enterprises in public ownership

Therefore the Welsh government, public bodies, local government and community organisations must have the power to establish new enterprises specifically designed to deliver national priority outcomes. Particular attention should be paid to supply chains, unblocking pent-up potential by establishing new suppliers further down the chain. This approach should also be adopted to correct the market failure in privatised public services such as the privatised social care sector.

A public stake in firms relying on public support

The Welsh government must have the right to provide finance to private enterprise in exchange for equity shares in the business, setting conditions which help meet national aims and priorities.

The purpose would be to secure a sustainable and lasting relationship between Welsh government and the enterprise as part of the latter's ongoing business activity, not simply as a one-off project. The workforce, through their trade unions, should be engaged as partners in the co-production of such agreements.

Planning Agreements

The Communist Party has long argued that the Welsh government, public bodies and local government must have the power to conclude planning agreements with public, private or third-sector enterprises. Such planning agreements would set out the requirements that the enterprise must meet in order to qualify for public

funds and planning permission. This should include outcome targets linked not only to national priorities but also to fair work and sustainability standards and—where appropriate—an enforceable proportion of affordable new housing and affordable access to facilities by the local community.

The Welsh government has now begun such an approach in its procurement policy, but this should also be applied more widely to all major public funding projects. Furthermore, the workforce through its trade unions should be engaged as partners in the joint production of such agreements.

**THE COMMUNIST
PARTY WILL
DEVELOP
CAMPAIGN
MATERIALS
OUTLINING OUR
CASE FOR AN
ECONOMY THAT
PUTS PEOPLE
BEFORE PROFIT.**



REAL POWER AT WORK

We spend a huge proportion of our time at work bound by the policies and procedures of our employers. Our labour collectively produces all the goods and services in our lives and yet, in our capitalist system, we have very little power over how these are organised. The Communist Party continues to call for an extension of democracy into the world of work.

Through its Social Partnership and Procurement Bill, Welsh government has brought forward some positive proposals that will deepen the involvement of trade unions in decision-making, particularly in relation to public sector employers and contracts. Even minor improvements need to be supported, but the draft Bill reveals two major weaknesses in the Welsh government's approach that cannot be ignored.

Firstly, there is a naïveté in the construction of the tripartite model that fails to recognise the fundamental contradictions within the capitalist system. Employers, regardless of the personal qualities of managers, are engaged in a systematic drive to maximise profit through the exploitation of workers. Competition compels it. Conflict between the interests of workers and of employers will inevitably arise and with the full weight of the ruling institutions and ideas, the legal system and the dominant mass media on their side, employers enter negotiations with enormous power that is denied to the workers. The Bill's proposals do little to redress this huge imbalance.

Secondly, it is clear from the drafting that the Welsh government's desire to enhance the role of workers in decision-making has been curtailed drastically so that the Bill can be shoe-horned into the narrow legislative competence that will avoid conflict with the British government and state. This is both futile and self-defeating. The conflict is inevitable and has already begun. We see it in the threat by British government to repeal the Trade Union (Wales) Act 2017 and in the attempt to abolish the Welsh agricultural wages board before that.

Instead, we need a bold plan that demands the powers to legislate for workplace democracy in Wales and at the same time unites with the struggle against the anti-trade union laws taking place across Britain.

Communists call for the election of a left

government at British level, with the powers and resources to implement the Charter of Workers' Rights (produced by the Institute of Employment Rights) and restore the value of wages and pensions.

At the same time, a campaign led by the trade union movement itself is urgently needed. Unions should never rely on governments, political parties, employers or the law for their rights or their strength. However much the conditions for working-class advance may be improved by government policy and legislative changes, only militant collective trade union action will secure the maximum benefits for working people. Trades unions in Wales therefore need to have a twin-track strategy:

- Winning and securing legislative and policy advances at Welsh and British levels.
- Recruiting, organising, educating and mobilising trade union members to win significant economic, social and political advance through collective action.

The wage militancy we have seen across the country in recent years is a welcome awakening for the whole trade union movement in Wales. We have also seen in initiatives such as the TUC's A Workers' Manifesto for a Fairer Wales (2021) an attempt by the movement to grapple with the wider social and political implications of our day-to-day struggles and to begin to

question some systematic elements of capitalist exploitation. These have thus far been tentative steps, with insufficient emphasis on mobilisation in our workplaces and communities.

The communist answer is to support workers in struggle through our work inside trade unions and with other resources such as Strike Map and the Morning Star's industrial reporting. We will ensure the policies in this programme make their way onto the agenda of trade union conferences but, more importantly, we will fight for these policies at the local level in trade union branches, trades councils and in communities through the Peoples Assembly, local groups and other progressive campaigns.

**A KEY TASK OF THE INCOMING
WELSH COMMITTEE WILL BE
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW
TRADE UNION STRATEGY TO
RE-INVIGORATE OUR WORK
AND EXPAND OUR INFLUENCE
IN THIS KEY AREA OF
STRUGGLE.**



REAL POWER TO PROTECT THE PLANET, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Today's climate emergency has arisen as a result of capitalism's innate drive to maximise profit whatever the consequences in terms of waste, pollution and global warming. In Wales, we have seen centuries of exploitation of our natural resources to benefit big business. Our coal reserves were ruthlessly exploited, our land has been mismanaged and our water resources plundered.

The Welsh Communist Party calls for substantial investment in renewable energy production and a new approach to land use and agriculture.

In particular, the Senedd's new powers of consent for energy generation projects under the 2017 Wales Act must be extended to cover the largest schemes (above 350 megawatts).

The proposed Severn Barrage scheme will have a detrimental impact on the local environment and eco-system, while almost certainly excluding the Welsh Senedd and government from a meaningful share of control in its ownership and control. But schemes to develop tidal lagoon power in Swansea Bay and the Severn estuary offer greater benefits, lower impacts and the possibility of democratic ownership and control. There is also an urgent need to investigate the possibilities for harnessing tidal power in the Dee and Clwyd estuaries. There is scope to expand offshore wind farms around Wales.

The aim should be to shift energy production in Wales completely to renewable sources. In the transition period, Communists support the development of clean coal and carbon capture technology, using deep-mined rather than opencast coal. This offers a much safer option as a transition fuel than nuclear fission. We support the aim of a nuclear-free Wales, while allowing for the possibility that a safe nuclear fusion option will be developed.

Under EU agricultural and free trade policies, Welsh agriculture has been geared towards producing for export to the EU market. At the same time, our home retail sector has been opened up to massive imports. The environmental consequences of importing large quantities of lamb from New Zealand while we export 95% of Welsh lamb to Europe is only one example of the illogical chaos created by free-market capitalism.

A focus on local needs will free up a proportion of

Welsh agricultural land for alternative uses such as natural carbon capture and storage through afforestation and the reinstatement of natural bog-lands.

The Welsh government's policy of selling Welsh land to hedge funds that allow big corporations to offset their carbon does not help local biodiversity and contributes to the decline of the Welsh language in farming communities across Wales as farmers and their families are a big percentage of first language Welsh speakers. They are unable to contend with the prices that hedge funds can pay for this land. Welsh Communists insist that local land is used sustainably for the benefit of the local community.

The carbon trading schemes developed by the EU and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are yet another attempt to shift the burden of the climate crisis away from the big business producers and their government backers who are most responsible. We need direct regulation of industry and funding for carbon reduction from direct taxation, instead of allowing the big polluters to continue to wreck the planet.

The climate crisis is also a crisis for the Welsh language. Many of our Welsh-speaking communities in north and west Wales are situated in coastal areas which will be the first to suffer the consequences of rising sea levels and land erosion. Although the climate crisis was caused primarily by the effects of

industrialisation under a capitalist system in the West, it is the Global South that is experiencing the first effects of climate disaster. In Wales, we can expect to see a rise in climate refugees. Our policies of decent affordable housing, and free health care and education to all must extend to our refugees along with access to Welsh language classes for all refugees welcomed to Wales.

Cleaner, safer, connected communities

A decade of austerity cuts must be reversed. Street lighting should be restored and extended to make our communities safer. Local police stations must open their doors to the public again. More wardens, park attendants and transport staff would make more of our open spaces safe for the public.

No locality in Wales should be without advice, support and safe accommodation nearby for women and children seeking to escape domestic violence. Can there be a more urgent and necessary priority for action by the Welsh and local government, working in partnership with voluntary sector agencies?

We need to make sure that people can travel for work within or near their local community, comfortably and affordably. That will reduce and combat carbon emissions and help our communities to survive and thrive.

The crazy routine whereby large numbers of commuters crowd the M4, the A55, the A48 and the A470 every morning and evening must be brought to an end. It is wasteful and

unsustainable. The long commute by private car must be consigned to the history books and replaced by efficient public transport, homeworking and community-based workspaces.

Together with the unions, the Communist Party believes that the railways and bus services should be brought back into public ownership where they can be properly planned, coordinated, and funded. The establishment of Transport for Wales to take over Wales and the Borders rail services is a step towards this goal, but now needs to be complemented by the renationalisation of train operating, rolling stock and rail freight companies across England as well as Wales.

This is the only rational, affordable and democratically accountable basis on which the railway network in Wales can be substantially enhanced, extended and modernised.

In order to boost passenger and freight traffic through Cardiff (Wales) Airport, the Senedd must have the power to vary or abolish the Air Passenger Duty, together with the resources to invest in rail and aviation services serving the airport. This would help end the environmentally damaging reliance on Bristol Airport for many Welsh travellers.

Llwybr Newydd: The Wales 2021 Transport Strategy demonstrates the current impotence, setting out well-meaning plans

and aspirations in fine detail, but without the means to turn grand schemes into reality. Wales will continue to be held back by its unbalanced and disjointed transport system, until we have the powers and resources to plan and develop our railway, freight, aviation and seaport infrastructure.

Housing at the heart of community

A good-quality, affordable and secure home is a basic human right. Welsh Communists call for a new approach to housing to meet the needs and aspirations of the people; not to feed the greed of landowners, developers, bankers and big shareholders. The priorities must be to eradicate sub-standard housing, overcrowding, unfair rents and homelessness.

Around 8,000 new homes are required in Wales each year simply to meet growing demand. That's 2,000 more than the annual new-build. Then there are the 67,000 households on waiting lists. Meanwhile, there are almost 30,000 residential properties in Wales—almost all in the private sector—that have been empty for more than six months, including at least 23,000 holiday homes.

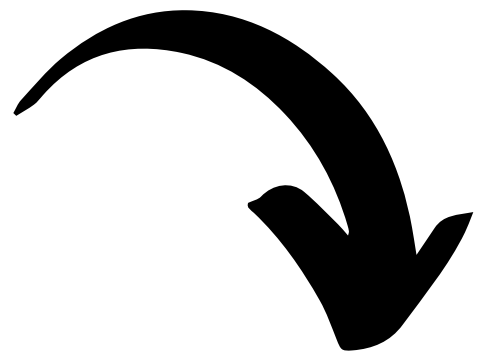
It is also the case in Wales that the housing crisis has a direct impact on the future of the Welsh language. Any housing policy must take into account the impact of housing on the Welsh language, especially the predominantly Welsh speaking-communities in north and west Wales. We support Cymdeithas yr Iaith's call for a Deddf Eiddo (Property Act) and recognise that when second homes are

bought in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas it impacts the language negatively. The next generation of Welsh speakers are priced out of their local community which results in the loss of Welsh as a community language.

The second-home problem in Welsh-speaking communities also leads to local Welsh-medium school closures which again erodes our language. A housing policy in Wales must take into account the additional strain placed on marginalised languages such as Welsh by a capitalist housing market.

Welsh-speaking communities must be protected via housing schemes so that the Welsh language can thrive for the benefit of all Welsh people. Local people need access to affordable housing in their local area.

The application of new Council Tax and 'change of use' rules for Wales in 2023 will help to stem the spread of holiday homes and lets in areas where local people cannot afford to buy or rent accommodation in their own community. But much more will be needed to tackle the chronic housing crisis in Wales.



IN THE WELSH COMMUNIST PARTY'S HOUSING CHARTER, WE PROPOSE:

- BUILDING MUCH MORE COUNCIL AND SOCIAL HOUSING—MORE THAN 10,000 UNITS A YEAR IN WALES.
- REGENERATING RUN-DOWN COUNCIL ESTATES.
- ENDING SALES OF PUBLIC LAND TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS.
- USING MORE COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDERS (CPOS) WHERE NECESSARY.
- TAXING OWNERS OF VACANT LAND AND PROPERTIES MORE STEEPLY.
- PROTECTING PREDOMINANTLY WELSH-SPEAKING AREAS BY ENSURING HOUSING MEETS LOCAL NEEDS AND HELPS TO PRESERVE WELSH AS A COMMUNITY LANGUAGE.
- ESTABLISHING NATIONAL AND LOCAL SAVINGS INSTITUTIONS THAT SPECIALISE IN HOUSING FINANCE AND SUPPORT NATIONAL AND LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES.

- All social housing should be brought back under direct and accountable local authority control, with adequate funding and the re-establishment of direct labour organisations.
- Free or affordable sheltered accommodation and residential care must be available for the elderly in every part of Wales.
- The provision of suitable accommodation for all homeless households should be a real statutory duty in order to end overcrowding and rough sleeping. The Bedroom Tax should be repealed and full housing benefit restored for all under 35s.
- Private sector rent rises and levels should be capped in keeping with local circumstances and subject to a national limit. In response to Covid, we call for a freeze on social housing rents and extending the Coronavirus ban on evictions until the end of 2023 at the earliest.

Such a programme could be further funded from the new Welsh taxes and surcharges on land transactions, vacant land, second homes and holiday lets, and by lifting the limits placed on capital borrowing by local authorities and housing associations, allowing them greater access to low-interest credits and loans from the Bank of England and National Public Works Loan Board.

The Communist Party supports organisations at local, regional and national level that campaign for improved tenants' rights and for housing development to be locally controlled and based on assessed housing need.

IN THE COMING PERIOD, THE COMMUNIST PARTY WILL REVIEW ITS LINKS WITH COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL, TRANSPORT AND HOUSING CAMPAIGNERS THROUGHOUT WALES AND DEVELOP PLANS FOR DEEPENING OUR INFLUENCE AND ENHANCING COORDINATION AND UNITY IN THESE CAMPAIGN AREAS.



REAL POWER TO CARE - HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Many people applauded the heroic work of our health workers throughout the Covid-19 crisis. But the pandemic also highlighted our reliance on precarious supply chains for medicines, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE).

We cannot rely on multinational corporations to produce the hospital and protective equipment, the medicines, the test-and-trace systems and the vaccines that will be so desperately needed to overcome future epidemics.

The private companies' overriding priority is the profits of a few, not the health of the many. The big pharmaceutical companies have grown fat on public money and the NHS for long enough—they should be taken into public ownership and made to serve the public good.

It is essential that Wales continues its divergent path from the British government when it comes to the involvement of the private sector in the health service. The Welsh government has helped retain the public spirit ethos of Aneurin Bevan's original vision, but our NHS remains vulnerable to greedy elements which prey on it. We need an urgent review of those areas of the Welsh NHS exploited by private firms.

We also face an immediate funding crisis in the NHS in Wales. But we cannot rely only on ever-increasing hospital budgets, new drugs and equipment. We must shift to a much greater emphasis on dealing with the social and environmental determinants of ill health through intervention and prevention.

Prevention is better than cure

To tackle health inequalities, we need a system that brings together communities, their GPs and the full range of public services to act on the causes of ill health. Since the 1970s, the World Health Organisation has recognised the importance of community involvement in prevention and public health policies. Government reports repeat this, yet it is not successfully embedded in Wales.

The way GP surgeries are commissioned and run needs to change. In each area, we need a primary health service that has responsibility for that whole community's long-term health. The chief causes of illness in each community must be locally assessed and targeted, whether they are poor housing, poor diet, or a lack of open spaces

and free or affordable exercise facilities.

Primary health partnerships should bring together GPs, the local council and residents, housing associations, schools and public health professionals to tackle generations of ill-health.

In many areas, securing an appointment with a GP or dentist is far too difficult even in normal conditions, while in other areas GPs compete for patients. At the all-Wales level, therefore, there needs to be a planned approach to the training and recruitment of medical staff based on projected need in every locality.

A national care service

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated both the fragility of our elderly and social care services and the dedication of their staff.

The direct delivery of personal social care must be entrusted only to well-trained, decently-paid professionals. We need to tackle the poor pay and conditions, the staff shortages and the underfunding which plague this sector.

That's why trade unions and the Communist Party demand a standard employment contract for care work—including sick pay, contracted hours and pay for all hours on duty including 'sleep-ins' and travel time—applying to workers in clients' own homes and in residential homes.

The wholesale privatisation of elderly care has led to 'free market' anarchy and chaos. A lot of private companies compete for contracts from local authorities, triggering a 'race to the bottom' in the quality of training, pay and care. In wealthier areas, many firms compete for the custom; in other areas, care providers are scarce.

Welsh Communists call for much greater integration of the health and social care services. Currently, the complexity of funding is a nightmare for workers, residents and their families. Funding is allocated from separate budgets for an individual's social care and basic or complex nursing needs.

This complex web of local authority, NHS and private funding adds inconsistency, delay and huge bureaucratic burdens. Residential and nursing care should be free at the point of need and planned over the long term.

We owe it to our ageing population to plan the provision of sheltered housing, care home places and properly trained and rewarded staffing over a 25-year period. At the core must be publicly owned and accountable public-sector provision; privately-owned care homes would have to help deliver the plan and its high standards or face closure.

The Welsh government recognised the challenge of planning for long-term care when commissioning the Holtham Report, *Paying for Social Care* (2018). But there are significant gaps in the report's findings. Holtham's proposal for a

ring-fenced social care portion of income tax ignores the potential that a tax on wealth and profits could have.

As Communists, we believe that accumulated private and corporate wealth as well as big business profits should play their part in funding social care. In Wales as elsewhere, that burden should not rest only or mainly on individual income taxpayers.

For Britain as a whole, the Communist Party proposes to make the rich and big business pay for their bail-outs with a Wealth Tax; a windfall tax on banking, energy and retail super-profits; a transaction tax on financial dealings in the City of London; an increase in top rates of Capital Gains Tax; and an immediate increase in Corporation Tax on company profits.

A Social Wage for parents and carers

Jobs that do not make a profit—such as caring for family members—are not valued as they should be in our society. As the pandemic has shown, this is also true of essential workers in the public and private sectors.

We should not be surprised: capitalism is a system organised to make profit. Most of that profit belongs to the wealthiest top layer of people. Most of it is not invested back into the community, funding vital industries and services. Much of it is spent on luxury products, or on financial and property

speculation, or sent to British-run tax havens around the world. To those who have, more shall be given.

By forcing as many people as possible into waged work, capitalism erodes our bonds of family and community. Fewer people are left to care for our children, our elderly and our most vulnerable. Of those who do, many face poverty and a lack of support from a system that doesn't care much about the carers. Overwhelmingly, it is women who bear the brunt of unpaid and low-paid care work in our society.

Depending on the circumstances, caring for others leaves many carers at an extra disadvantage when they reach retirement age. As well as missing out on an occupational or workplace pension, they may not qualify for the full state pension.

Caring for children, too, is undervalued and in many cases unpaid. Entitlements to child-related tax credits and benefits have been slashed.

Yet 190,000 children in Wales live in poverty (2021). That is almost one in three (31%) and rising due to Tory welfare reforms and the impact of Covid on jobs and incomes. Worse is coming unless we stop it.

That's why Welsh Communists propose these measures as part of a programme across Britain to support parents, children and carers and abolish child poverty:

- A Social Wage for all parents and carers who leave waged work in order to care for children, family or community members.
- The full state pension for all parents and carers who have taken time away from waged work to care for their children, family or community members.
- More extensive paid maternity and paternity leave for all parents: keep jobs open to parents until all their children are of statutory school age.
- Free childcare from birth for those parents who wish to return to waged work after childbirth.
- Paid Parental Leave from work for child-related emergencies.
- A generously funded and robust National Care Service that would offer services for care in much the same way as a generously funded and robust NHS can offer services for health.

**THE WELSH
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OUR POWERFUL VOICE— EDUCATION, CULTURE AND MEDIA FOR ALL

Education

The Communist Party applauds the work done by education trade unionists to keep our children safe during the pandemic. School staff, in consultation with parents, pupils and the wider community, have shown leadership and compassion through the Covid crisis. They should lead the much-needed reforms in our schools and colleges.

We need an alternative assessment system to replace the madness of the 'exam factory'. Frontline education professionals need to be freed from the bureaucracy of ESTYN and layers of regional management.

We advocate the introduction of new primary legislation in Wales to:

- Establish the principle of a comprehensive secular primary and secondary education system.
- Bring all schools under democratic local authority control.
- Abolish charitable status for private schools and bring them all into the public sector.
- Ensure that all children attend their nearest school, unless their particular needs require alternative arrangements.
- Abolish Estyn but require LEAs to ensure a system of quality assurance is in place, after consultation with professional teaching representatives in the area.
- Prohibit the establishment of independent schools and provide powers of enforcement if breaches are reported.
- Provide parameters for home schooling arrangements.

Only then can we design a future that values and enhances our children's talents, rather than one designed for the production of league tables.

Education plays a vital role in supporting the Welsh language. Welsh-medium schools and nurseries must become readily available in every part of Wales. This is no small task and new measures are required to support the increasing use of Welsh in every school environment and for training many more bilingual teachers.

Fluency in Welsh should be a basic right for all children living in Wales. According to Cymdeithas yr Iaith, 80% of Welsh children are deprived of their own language. This is a direct result of failures in our education system in Wales. We fail

to offer a Welsh language education to children who have immigrated or fled to Wales to seek refuge.

In black and minority ethnic communities, we do not do enough to offer a Welsh-medium education. Even in communities where Welsh is the dominant language, children often grow up deficient in Welsh because of the shortcomings of the bilingual school system in those areas.

In areas where Welsh is not the dominant language, it is not enough that children are able to travel cross-county to Welsh-medium schools on transport provided by local authorities. In the medium term, we must make it easier for families to choose Welsh-medium education by extending the provision of schools so that all children can receive Welsh-medium education within their local communities. We support the work of RHAG (Parents for Welsh-language Education) as it lobbies local authorities and the Welsh government to make Welsh-medium education accessible for more of our children.

It is not right that parents and local groups still have to campaign and lobby for their children to receive a Welsh-medium education. In the long term, we support the Welsh Language Education Act proposed by Cymdeithas yr Iaith which calls for a future where all children in Wales receive a fully Welsh-medium education and finish their

studies completely bilingual. This provision must include access to higher education and adult education through the medium of Welsh.

Fee-paying schools are a system of class discrimination that entrenches social inequality and privilege. They have no place in a democratic society. Communists advocate the abolition of private education in Wales.

Culture and media

As Communists, we believe that all forms of culture should be for everyone and that class-based divisions in society constrain, prevent and spoil our enjoyment of all the cultural activities which we need to enjoy life and be fully human. Furthermore, the capitalist mode of production also ensures the exploitation of those who work in the cultural sector.

The higher earnings associated with the more glamorous end of the industry are reserved for a vanishingly small elite. Low-paid precarious work is the norm for the vast majority including writers, journalists, artists and technicians. As Communists, we need to increase our engagement and solidarity with the struggles of these workers through their trade unions and build links between the sector and precarious workers in other industries.

Access to culture via music, dance, art and creative writing lessons must be available to all children for free. The decreasing number of peripatetic music teachers, for example, means that only a chosen few have access to free music

lessons at school and only those from privileged homes are able to access private tutors.

The recruitment to the Morning Star staff of a Wales-based reporter is a major step forward for the recognition of Welsh issues within the British media landscape. It contrasts markedly with the declining interest or continually hostile treatment of Wales in the mainstream of British press and broadcasting.

Our domestic media contain a wide range of small independent voices, but more needs to be done to foster coordination and collaboration between progressive publishers and media across the nation.

Cultural and news content for Wales must be seen as a public service—our Welsh language TV and radio channels need to be well funded. Welsh culture cannot survive a capitalist mode of operating whereby broadcasting channels, film and television programmes, magazines and journals are expected to make a profit in order to survive. These public spaces allow us to philosophically and politically examine and assess our situation as a nation; to reflect upon the impact of an imperialistic, neoliberal ‘British’ system on our culture; and to strengthen and promote the Welsh language by using it to discuss challenging possibilities and ideas.

At present, the whole creative industry is in crisis. Magazines and journals in Wales are funded via a grant scheme financed by the Welsh government. Without these grants, the only magazines to be published would be those that make a profit, something which is almost impossible for a marginalised culture. Despite the demands on the Welsh government's insufficient funding from Westminster for key services like health and education, freedom of the press and a thriving culture are still important and need our protection. These grants and funding in general for the arts are a lifeline to our intellectual community in Wales, but they must allow for proper and sustainable working conditions for staff and contributors.

We must insist on a Welsh government that allows us our own self-emancipation. For socialists that means the emancipation of the working class and for that we need decent working conditions for all working people and a culture that is free to flourish.

THE WELSH COMMUNIST PARTY WILL DEVELOP MATERIALS TO PROMOTE ITS IDEAS ON EDUCATION, MEDIA AND CULTURE IN COMMUNITIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE COMING YEARS. WE WILL CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND THE REACH AND INFLUENCE OF THE MORNING STAR ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



POWER FOR THE WELSH LANGUAGE TO THRIVE AND GROW

The Annual Population Survey indicates that the number and proportion of Welsh-speakers is continuing its uneven but upward trend since 2007, despite the disappointing ten-year decreases recorded by the 2011 and 2021 census figures.

The Welsh language is an asset that belongs to all the people of Wales, but also to the people of Britain as a whole. In a federal system, an important element will be to recognise and protect the languages and cultures of Britain by educating all the children of Britain about Welsh and Scottish culture, languages and history, making them an integral aspect of the curriculum across Britain. Welsh Communists support the work that Cymdeithas yr Iaith continues to do to protect and campaign for the Welsh language, its Welsh-speaking local

communities and all those who wish to learn or use it.

It is not enough to have a specific section on the language itself within a programme of work and policies. The needs of the Welsh language must be considered in all aspects of policy. In education, we must campaign for the right of all children in Wales to be fluent in their own language; in housing, we must acknowledge that the capitalist crisis affecting homes also affects our Welsh-language communities in Wales. Much more can be done to protect these areas, for example in Ireland: when new homes are built in the Gaeltacht, 20% of them must be reserved for Irish-speaking occupants who can demonstrate the ability to preserve and protect the language and culture of the Gaeltacht for a period of 15 years.

Considering the climate crisis, we must accept that it is also a crisis for the language. Rising sea levels and the erosion of land will mean that many of our Welsh-speaking communities will be in danger. On a global level, we can foresee many more climate refugees arriving in Wales and we should be offering, as part of our welcome, free Welsh lessons for all refugees.

The Welsh government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 cannot exist in a vacuum as it currently does. Speaking Welsh involves all of life. As well as access to Welsh-medium education, healthcare, care and business dealings, we must be able to grow, create and enjoy our own culture in Welsh. Adequately funded publishing houses, magazines, newspapers, film,

music, television and radio programmes and stations must be seen as essential if we are to take seriously the survival of our language. The Welsh government's policies—and subsequent funding—need to reflect the fundamental role that culture plays in cultivating and strengthening the Welsh language.

Protecting and helping the Welsh language to flourish means protecting and helping all the people and the communities of Wales to flourish. Our response to the language issue must be integrated into our wider socialist response to the crisis of capitalism. Those things that are detrimental to our communities and people generally are, by default, also detrimental to the Welsh language and its survival.

As a prominent figure in the modern history of the Welsh language, culture and politics, TE Nicholas ('Niclas y Glais') and his works deserve to be promoted and celebrated. Welsh Communists will continue to work with their friends and allies to support Cymdeithas Niclas (the Nicholas Society) and its activities.

THE WELSH COMMUNIST PARTY WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE CYMDEITHAS NICLAS AND SUPPORT THE WORK OF CYMDEITHAS YR IAITH JOINING THEM IN CAMPAIGNS TO DEFEND, DEVELOP AND EXPAND THE WELSH LANGUAGE ACROSS WALES.



REAL POWER FOR ALL

The capitalist system thrives on the basis of a divide-and-rule approach which fosters prejudice and discrimination.

The fight for women's liberation

The oppression of women in society is a mark of how oppressed that society is as a whole. According to the Women's Budget Group, the cost of living crisis is likely to affect women particularly hard because women are more likely than men to work in areas hardest hit by the crisis, for example, social care, education, retail and health care.

By autumn 2022, food prices had risen by 12% over the previous 12 months, energy bills by 65% and transport costs by 15%, while housing and childcare costs have also risen. These all disproportionately affect women because women also tend to take on the majority of the care work needed in families and in society as a

whole. Women, therefore, are more likely than men to be in a fragile or vulnerable financial situation to begin with and will find it more difficult to overcome economic crises. Women tend to have lower incomes than men as a result of their caring responsibilities which means that they are more dependent on public services and social security. This situation is even more pronounced for single mothers, disabled women and women from particular ethnic minority backgrounds.

As part of its response to these realities, the Welsh Communist Party will promote and help strengthen the National Assembly of Women, seeking with allies to establish a Welsh affiliate of that campaigning organisation.

In order to end the financial oppression of women, Welsh Communists also call for a socialist response to this crisis. Our Wage for Parents and Carers campaign is part of our answer to the financial insecurities that women face as a result of their care work, as it would not only acknowledge the labour that this role entails by paying a decent wage for it, but it is also a way of sharing out this labour more equally between men and women. For example, the campaign calls for up to five years of maternity and paternity leave so that jobs are kept open for parents until the child is of statutory school age.

Any gains on the road to socialism are also gains for women: more and better funding for education, health and social care, publicly owned

public transport, nationalised energy companies and investment in green energy for the future of our children and our planet. Working practices need to become more flexible and financially secure for all, so that caring for family and community members becomes a system of shared responsibility.

THE WELSH COMMUNIST PARTY WILL WORK WITH OUR ALLIES TO STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN WALES AND BUILD NATIONAL AND LOCAL CAMPAIGNS.

Anti-racism, anti-fascism

In Britain, an imperialist power which once ruled a quarter of the globe, racist ideas are deeply embedded. The British state continues to implement and further develop racist immigration and nationality laws. Since our last congress, we have seen contradictory developments, the emergence of a new generation of activists in the Black Lives Matter movement, the jailing of the fascist National Action activists, but an increase in reported hate crime in England and Wales by over 25%.

At a political level, the Welsh government

has limited authority and power in this field but we welcome the publication of its Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan in June 2022; its success will depend on its strict implementation at all levels of Welsh civil society. This should be used in conjunction with the introduction of Black History in Welsh schools this year, which should be used not in isolation but as a fundamental element in understanding the history of capitalist development here.

We also welcome the Wales TUC 10-point plan to tackle racism in the workplace. Anti-racism is a collective movement, something that cannot be achieved by one person or by one organisation. We believe, however, that the Wales TUC as the mass organisation of the working class should play the pivotal role in this struggle in Wales.

Our work on anti-fascism continues to benefit from our broad connections with international allies and our celebration of historic victories over the far right.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY WILL FIGHT FOR THE BROADEST POSSIBLE UNITY IN ANTI-RACISM ACTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE OUR SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE MEMORIAL EVENTS AND THE TWM SBAEN FESTIVAL.



REAL POWER THROUGH PROGRESSIVE FEDERALISM

Whoever is the next prime minister of Britain, we in Wales will continue to suffer under the heel of policies for which we have not voted. To some degree, our parliament, the Senedd, in Cardiff can counteract the consequences of policies decided in the Westminster Parliament. However, even the meagre rights we have been able to win in the current devolution settlement have been threatened and in some cases summarily withdrawn in recent years. This arrangement cannot be allowed to continue.

Throughout this programme, we have called for the extension of economic, democratic and social powers that we feel are needed to tackle the immediate issues facing working people and their families in Wales. These powers are also needed to provide the foundation of the new fair and just society we need to build free

from domination by the capitalist monopolies.

There is an urgent need to bring together progressive forces from the labour and national movements, community groups and campaigners to fight for new powers which can be exercised in Wales. Only the Tories and the advocates of British imperialism can win if those who advocate independence and those who argue for federalism or other forms of extended democracy are unable to unite around a set of immediate demands for the extension of powers.

The Welsh Communist Party advocate a progressive federal structure of British governance that sees self-determination, equality and mutual aid as the foundation of the relationship between the nations of Britain. We see this as the only realistic immediate alternative to the unionism which maintains the domination of Welsh politics and economics by a largely English ruling class.

Without British state power, there is no possibility of the people of Wales gaining their share of the wealth owned by that capitalist class and largely managed through the City of London and banks around the world.

Our best chance at wresting power from the largely England-based capitalist elite that presides over the companies operating in Wales is through united action with our comrades from the nations and regions of Britain, through the labour movement structures we have established.

Any version of 'independence' that would give away the powers that should reside in Wales to the unelected EU Commission, the unaccountable European Central Bank and the anti-trade union EU Court of Justice will fail to deliver the change we so desperately need.

The Welsh Communist Party has called for Welsh self-government in a federal Britain for more than 70 years. The policy is now gaining support in some Welsh Labour circles under the banner of Radical Federalism.

The Welsh Parliament needs the powers to raise funds and invest in local and regional economies.

The Senedd and local authorities must have greater freedom from central government and Whitehall to raise funds from the low-interest Public Works Loan Board and in the capital markets.

Council Tax should be replaced by a local income tax based on the ability to pay. This will end the unfairness inflicted on low-income households.

As a result of Brexit, EU rules limiting the right of devolved and local government to award public procurement contracts locally no longer apply. That new power must be fully devolved to the Senedd, so that preference can be given to supporting jobs and businesses in our local communities.

Leaving the EU also enables the Bank of England to extend credit and bond purchase facilities to devolved and local government and other public bodies, which should be made full use of when the terms are more favourable than in the 'free' market.

The Barnett block grant formula does not recognise the needs of deprived working-class communities when allocating funds central funds to Wales and our local public services. It must be replaced by arrangements that do not disadvantage Wales.

In addition, the Senedd must have greater fund-raising powers to end its 80% dependence on central governments in London for its funds. These should include the right to vary income tax bands and thresholds without the veto of the Westminster Parliament, to vary VAT and the Aggregates Levy free from EU rules, to borrow for capital investment in projects other than infrastructure, and to introduce its own taxes and levies on wealth and corporate profits.

The benefits system is a vital lifeline for many. It's not implemented fairly in Wales, where we have a higher incidence of sickness and incapacity benefits. Our own government should have the ability to supplement particular benefits where funding allows and to ensure that they are administered humanely.

Finally, we need to decouple the law of 'England and Wales' to allow a distinct Welsh jurisdiction.

Federalism is within our grasp. Afterwards, the people of Wales will be in the best situation to decide whether they wish to move to full sovereignty.

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OUR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

THE WELSH COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS LEADING COMMITTEE WILL:

- PRODUCE CAMPAIGN MATERIALS OUTLINING OUR CASE FOR AN ECONOMY FOR THAT PUTS PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT.
- DEVELOP A NEW TRADE UNION STRATEGY TO RE-INVIGORATE OUR WORK AND EXPAND OUR INFLUENCE IN THIS KEY AREA OF STRUGGLE.
- REVIEW ITS LINKS WITH COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL, TRANSPORT AND HOUSING CAMPAIGNERS THROUGHOUT WALES AND DEVELOP PLANS FOR DEEPENING OUR INFLUENCE AND ENHANCING COORDINATION AND UNITY IN THESE CAMPAIGN AREAS.
- PRODUCE MATERIALS TO PROMOTE ITS IDEAS ON HEALTH AND CARE IN COMMUNITIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE COMING YEARS.
- DEVELOP MATERIALS TO PROMOTE ITS IDEAS ON EDUCATION, MEDIA AND CULTURE IN COMMUNITIES AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE COMING YEARS. WE WILL CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND THE REACH AND INFLUENCE OF THE MORNING STAR ACROSS THE COUNTRY.
- CONTINUE TO PROMOTE CYMDEITHAS NICLAS AND SUPPORT THE WORK OF CYMDEITHAS YR IAITH, JOINING THEM IN CAMPAIGNS TO DEFEND, DEVELOP AND EXPAND THE WELSH LANGUAGE ACROSS WALES.
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- CONTINUE TO MAKE THE CASE FOR PROGRESSIVE FEDERALISM WHILE WORKING WITH BOTH THOSE SEEKING GREATER DEVOLUTION OF POWERS AND THOSE SEEKING INDEPENDENCE FOR WALES ON THE MANY URGENT DEMANDS WE SHARE.



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