



MANIFESTO 2021

GWLAD - OUR MANIFESTO

Introduction

Gwlad is committed to achieving a free and independent Wales in the shortest practical timescale – but it does need to be practical.

Our principal reason for aspiring to this is simply our belief that Wales is a nation: and the normal state of a nation is to be independent. Being a nation, but choosing to live in subservience to another nation as part of a highly unequal union, makes little sense.

We understand the historical reasons by which it has come about, but it is an anomaly which it is now the time to correct.

We also believe that as an independent nation, Wales will be in a better position to close the gap in economic prosperity and living standards which has long existed relative to its immediate neighbours and has noticeably widened in recent years.

Even so, we are realistic about the challenges that face Wales today.

Years of stunted economic growth have left us struggling to provide the basic public services expected in a modern economy without relying on cash transfers from outside our borders.

Constant repetition of the litany that Wales is ‘too small’ to be viable on its own, despite being much larger than many other independent states with much higher standards of living, causes many people to question whether we have the resources or abilities to govern ourselves successfully.

Therefore, Gwlad’s approach is to set out a programme for achieving a prosperous, successful independent Wales in two clear stages:

Stage 1

In the short term, we shall seek to work within the existing constitutional structures of Welsh Government and Senedd within the United Kingdom, showing how the powers already devolved may be used to achieve better outcomes.

Under the three parties who have been involved in running the Welsh Government since its inception – the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru – Wales has declined relative to the rest of the UK. We aim to demonstrate that this is not an inevitable consequence of having powers devolved to Wales, but rather that these powers can be used for Wales’s good. By using these powers well, we aim to “earn the right” to demand more, leading ultimately to Wales’s independence as a free democratic state.

Stage 2

In the longer term, we aim to build Wales up as a free, prosperous country with a vigorous multi-party democracy. We shall set out the policies which we shall advocate to ensure Wales remains successful, free and on good terms with all of its neighbours.

We should remark that, since the Wales Act 2017, the powers of the Welsh Government have been significantly extended: in particular, the situation has changed from “everything is reserved for Westminster unless it is specifically devolved” to “everything is devolved unless it is specifically reserved for Westminster”. Even so, few if any people really understand where the boundaries lie. The actions set out below for each stage are based upon our current understanding of the legislation. If it turns out that some of our proposals for ‘Stage 1’ cannot be implemented under the current arrangements, then we shall move them to ‘Stage 2’ (while regarding them as further arguments in favour of independence). Likewise, if it transpires that proposals for Stage 2 can in fact be implemented in Stage 1 using the Government’s existing powers, then we shall bring them forward.

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Welfare and Taxation

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>The current welfare benefits system ensnares people in a “welfare trap”.</p> <p>People who are on benefits are unable to take up employment without losing their benefits.</p> <p>If they subsequently lose that employment, they go to the ‘back of the queue’ in applying for Universal Credit.</p> <p>Consequently, even people who have the ability and opportunity to work are often discouraged from taking the first steps into work, especially if they have been out of work for a long time. This entrenches disadvantage and social exclusion within families and communities.</p> <p>It also means that some of the economic activity that does take place is on the ‘black market’ so as to avoid this trap. This denies legal protection to those who participate in such transactions, and means that</p>	<p>With a few minor exceptions, welfare and taxation are not within the remit of the Senedd.</p> <p>But while Wales generates taxes on behalf of the UK State, the amount generated is not clear and official figures that do exist mask the true situation.</p> <p>In order to clarify our true wealth, we will ensure that the Welsh Revenue Authority takes responsibility for accurately accounting for all the taxation revenue generated within Wales, and not just those minor taxes which it is responsible for gathering.</p>	<p>We advocate replacing the current benefits and taxation system with a much simpler Citizens’ Income and Flat Tax.</p> <p>All registered citizens would be entitled to a fixed income which would replace unemployment benefit and basic state pension. The unemployed can then choose to supplement their basic income by taking up additional work without losing their Citizens Income payments; people can then choose to start up their own businesses in the knowledge they have a guaranteed income while they get up and running. Those receiving disability benefits including Personal Independence Allowance (PIP), Employment Support Allowance (ESA) etc. would continue to do so and the systems would be aligned to ensure that no one is disadvantaged.</p> <p>In the same way, we believe that the tax system, with its extreme complexity and multiple different rates for different types and levels of income, discourages investment and causes too much energy to be channelled towards reducing tax rather than maximising earnings. We therefore advocate a flat tax rate on all income regardless of its source or its level, as practised in several other small nations in Europe.</p> <p>Working taxpayers who are citizens would continue to receive Citizens Income, and we believe that this combination will in practice be broadly cost neutral. The</p>

<p>a slice of the country's true Gross Value Added goes unrecognised.</p> <p>Moreover, even at higher incomes the current system discourages people who are just below the threshold of a higher tax band from doing things which would increase their own incomes.</p>		<p>relationship between pre-tax income and take-home pay will be close to what it is under the current system in the great majority of cases. Citizens Income for taxpayers could be regarded in practice as a tax refund, or even as a national dividend.</p> <p>Most importantly, even though the direct impact on people's net incomes will be insignificant in the short term, we believe that this combination of policies will stimulate enterprise and investment at both ends of the income scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those on low incomes, it will provide confidence to take on work or to start small businesses while retaining the security of steady and guaranteed income; • For those on high incomes, we expect the elimination of tax loopholes will lead to an increase in net tax collection, while at the same time incentivising enterprise due to the elimination of marginal rates. <p>To prevent people from getting into unmanageable debts and losing the benefit of receiving their citizens' income, we would prohibit lenders from taking a borrower's CI into account when calculating their ability to borrow. Loans would only be legally enforceable if the lender could demonstrate good grounds to believe the borrower could repay them from their additional earned income.</p>
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Education

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Education is critical both to the economic and cultural well-being of any nation.</p> <p>Our economy has been poorly served by a system ill-adapted to the needs of industry, while the nation's culture has been poorly served by the neglect to teach our own heritage, customs and status.</p> <p>Wales has fallen down the international "PISA" rankings in the last 20 years.</p> <p>Our education system is too focussed on academic qualifications, with technical and vocational qualifications being regarded as inferior. We reject this view. It has resulted in a generation of heavily indebted students with qualifications that do not improve their job prospects. It also results in people without academic qualifications being unfairly overlooked for jobs which they are more than capable of doing. We advocate excellence in academic education for students</p>	<p>We intend to address this as a matter of urgency, by utilising modern best practices from countries such as Finland and the Netherlands where state education is of a particularly high standard.</p> <p>We see world-class education as being a prerequisite for achieving the type of modern and flexible economy that Wales needs in order to flourish. Therefore we shall place a strong emphasis upon so-called STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and encourage the teaching of financial literacy and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>At primary level in particular, we shall seek to provide education as close as possible to where pupils live; with an emphasis on small local schools with small class sizes in which basic literacy and numeracy are taught to high standards, stratifying classes based on ability rather than age.</p> <p>In supporting bilingualism – which is now universally recognised as a positive benefit in education, and a way of enhancing pupils' cognitive function across the board - we intend to expand Welsh-medium primary and secondary education to the point where eventually it becomes the norm in every part of Wales. We realise that this will mean recruiting and training a much greater number of Welsh-speaking teachers and</p>	<p>Since education is a devolved matter, we believe that the majority of our programme can be put into practice even while working within the existing powers of the Senedd and Welsh Government.</p>

<p>who are suited to it, and excellence in vocational education for students who are suited to that, and we totally reject any distinction in status between the two.</p>	<p>enabling current non-Welsh-speaking teachers to learn the language to a proficient standard.</p> <p>Further details in the 'Culture' section of this manifesto.</p> <p>We recognise that just because someone is very accomplished within their field and/or a fluent Welsh speaker, they will not necessarily be an excellent teacher. Therefore we shall seek to develop recruitment and incentivisation policies that prioritise teaching ability.</p> <p>The Humanities content of our National Curriculum should be overhauled to prioritise learning of our history, traditions, culture and values. This will give people confidence in their national identity, and pride in their own history – including the ways in which Wales has welcomed people from many other cultures throughout its history.</p> <p>At University level, teaching should be predominantly through the medium of English so that elite academic staff may be recruited from across the world. Welsh universities should seek to be world-class in the quality of their teaching and research, and we deplore the current policy of providing Welsh students with funding to study outside of Wales. This amounts to using Welsh taxpayers' money to subsidise other countries' universities. We believe that student funding should generally only be given for students that are studying in Welsh institutions, other than for subjects for which there are no courses currently offered within Wales, or</p>	
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	<p>(such as veterinary science) offered only partially within Wales.</p> <p>Nevertheless we value the benefits of exposing Welsh students to other countries' education systems as well, broadening their horizons and providing access to international centres of excellence in particular subjects. We shall therefore strongly encourage exchange schemes, modelled on patterns such as the UK-US Fulbright programme, to enable Welsh students to study elsewhere and other countries' students to study in Wales.</p> <p>We shall propose the creation of a new regulatory body to ensure high-quality University courses with qualifications relevant to Welsh job market and identifiable skill shortages, and the removal of government funding from under-performing courses and Universities.</p> <p>For admissions, we shall replace UCAS by a new School-University combined application system based on interviews, proficiency tests and grades.</p> <p>We shall not neglect further education, recognising that in the modern employment market people's skills need to be renewed and updated constantly throughout their careers, with wholesale changes-of-direction sometimes being necessary. We shall encourage everyone of working age to invest in themselves so as to maximise their ability to carry out high-value and satisfying work, and seek to raise the productivity and thereby the average salaries of the Welsh workforce.</p>	
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Civic Service

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Following funding cuts made by local councils to youth services, after-school clubs and evening youth clubs, the provision of extracurricular educational and recreational activities for the country's youth has waned.</p> <p>In our view lets down the next generation of citizens and denies them the opportunity to develop socially and creatively within safe and well-structured environments.</p>	<p>Each secondary school and sixth form pupil should be offered the opportunity to partake in organised voluntary extracurricular educational and social activities, including volunteering, sports with sports science, cadet training etc.</p> <p>We propose to differentiate this offering from its forerunner by encouraging uptake, thereby instilling a sense of purpose and achievement, and making it available to young people beyond school age up to 25 years old.</p> <p>The programme could perhaps be linked to a points system for modules, and activities could be counted towards a pre-set discount against higher education fees, or towards the cost of further vocational or job based training within Wales.</p> <p>The overall aim would be to instil a sense of citizenship and community responsibility, through voluntary extracurricular activities that will help develop individual character, confidence and social interaction, while also investing in the further educational progression or in the chosen careers of those who choose to partake.</p>	<p>It is expected that the majority of these proposals could be implemented under the Welsh Government's existing powers, but a full review could be undertaken after independence to explore how the scheme could be improved or expanded.</p>

Health

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Gwlad is fully committed to the principle of universal free health care, and is firmly opposed to the privatisation of healthcare. We take particular pride in the role of Wales, and in particular the Tredegar Medical Aid Society, at the initial formation of the NHS.</p> <p>We recognise the efforts and dedication of past and present frontline staff delivering health services under difficult conditions, especially during the recent Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>However, the current NHS structure has diverged too far from its original vision. It has become too centralised and bureaucratic under the control of unelected health boards, and does not always represent good value for money or provide the most effective health care. We believe that other countries have developed more effective systems for the delivery of health services and we need to learn from best practices adopted by others.</p>	<p>We believe in providing more local health services - by combining smaller GP clinics into 'Polyclinics' which are able to provide a wider range of services locally, including many outpatient services, similar to former 'cottage hospitals'.</p> <p>These 'Polyclinics' could be run as mutual medical cooperatives - funded by the health service but self-managed.</p> <p>For specialist acute care and elective surgery, services are best provided by larger institutions; but we recognise that this presents particular challenges in a country with as scattered a population and such poor transport infrastructure as Wales currently has. We therefore regard investment in transport infrastructure as a high priority, not only because of its direct benefit to the economy as a whole but because of the extent to which it would facilitate more efficient healthcare provision across the country.</p> <p>Nevertheless we recognise that for some very specialist fields of medicine, Wales's population is simply too small to sustain world-class centres of excellence and we shall continue to use specialist facilities over the border (e.g. orthopaedics at Gobowen, neurology at Walton, paediatrics at Alder Hey, oncology at Clatterbridge) where this is the best way to provide appropriate care to Welsh patients.</p>	<p>The current system of health funding through central government from general taxation and National Insurance Contributions is unsustainable. We propose to develop an alternative system, modelled on best practices from other small European countries such as Luxembourg, combining government funding with mandatory health insurance.</p> <p>In effect, the mandatory health insurance would be a 'hypothecated tax', the proceeds of which would be used to provide healthcare. Appropriate provision would be made for those who are unable to pay, so that in practical terms healthcare would remain universal and free at the point of use. Nevertheless, the intention would be to depoliticise the subject of healthcare provision, and to give people more of a sense of ownership of their health service to the extent that they could see more clearly how much they'd be paying towards it.</p>

<p>We do not train enough of our own doctors and nurses. We intend to expand medical and nursing vocational training. We cannot rely permanently on doctors from beyond our borders, and it is important to employ health staff familiar with our peoples' culture and languages wherever possible.</p>	<p>We shall invest in training Welsh students in medicine, providing fee reductions to students who study medicine in Wales and undertake to work in Wales for a certain period of time on graduating. Nevertheless, recognising that a thorough medical education may need exposure to specialisms only found in larger centres of population, we would want to see continued collaboration with medical schools in England and elsewhere.</p>	
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Adult Social Care

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>This is a fraught topic for every advanced Western country, faced by an aging population and the prospect of rapidly escalating care costs.</p> <p>The issue is particularly acute in Wales because of the phenomenon of retired people from England moving into the country, particularly its rural areas, and therefore making heavy demands on the health and social services sectors while not making significant contributions to taxation.</p>	<p>We believe that Welsh pensioners should be decently treated with respect and dignity: being provided the services that they require whether in their own homes, which is always to be preferred, or in residential care where this is essential.</p> <p>Nevertheless offering benefits that are significantly more generous than England's while not being able to control the flow of English retirees into Wales makes no sense, and must be stopped with immediate effect.</p> <p>Instead we shall seek practical and pragmatic solutions to this difficult problem so that we offer the best possible care without unfairly penalising other taxpayers.</p>	<p>With independence these challenges become very much easier to manage.</p> <p>By means of residency controls (see later in this document) it will be possible to stem the flow of retirees from England into Wales or, even if they come, then they'd be like those who retire to Spain in that their pensions and benefits would be paid from Westminster's budget rather than Cardiff's.</p> <p>We could therefore build a better care system for Wales's own pensioners (and other adults requiring social care); most likely to be modelled on the proposals of the Dilnot Commission, with spending levels and personal contributions carefully assessed according to the economic conditions current in Wales at the time.</p>

<p>Absurdly, it is the policy of the current Welsh government to exacerbate the situation by making benefits for property-owning pensioners in Wales much more generous than those in England, with the 'savings threshold' - below which no contribution to care costs is expected - being £50,000 in Wales against just £22,500 in England.</p> <p>With education funding in Wales being on average £500 per pupil per year less than in England, this amounts to a direct transfer of government resources from poorer Welsh children to richer and predominantly English retirees, and cannot possibly be justified.</p>	<p>This is not an easy problem to solve; possibilities include a sliding income threshold based on number of years living full-time in Wales pre-retirement (with ownership of a second home not counting towards this), or delivering enhanced benefits to people who have tax-paying family in Wales – though this latter option would need to be implemented carefully to avoid unfairness to childless pensioners or to those whose children have moved away.</p> <p>All in all, the difficulty of handling this issue well, within current constraints, is a powerful argument for independence.</p>	<p>In any case our intention would be to implement an adult social care system which is at least as generous as that which we have at present, but only available in its entirety to those who are legitimately Welsh citizens and have paid taxes or drawn benefits within Wales prior to their retirement or incapacity.</p>
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Economy

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>The Welsh economy is over-reliant on the public sector and upon 'branch offices' of companies based outside Wales. Too much of the work provided by these institutions is low-skilled and low-value-added, leading to a chronic problem of low pay affecting even areas where</p>	<p>Both the private sector and the public sector have a role to play in our economy as and where appropriate. We believe that many of our public sector organisations are poorly run and would benefit from some private sector involvement.</p> <p>We must ensure that all publicly funded contracts include provision for sustainable local content to ensure</p>	<p>As part of our radical proposals for overhauling the tax and benefit system and the planning system (see the sections on 'Welfare and Taxation' and 'Housing'), we would want to see overall tax burdens shifted from corporate profits and placed instead onto personal incomes.</p>

<p>headline unemployment appears relatively low.</p> <p>The third sector (including housing associations, quangos etc.) has become too large, and unaccountable, and this sector needs to be drastically restructured to make it work for Wales.</p> <p>There is a dearth of high-quality private-sector jobs in Welsh-owned businesses, and too few people in Wales own a stake in the businesses for which they work.</p> <p>What's left of Wales's 'traditional' industries – such as steelmaking and automotive manufacturing – are regarded as 'high carbon' and increasingly rendered uneconomic through carbon taxes and artificially high energy prices. From a climate point of view this is counterproductive – it just causes production to switch to other countries with lower environmental standards while Wales loses the jobs and must still import the finished products.</p>	<p>that money spent by the Welsh Government and local authorities is spent in Wales wherever possible. A good recent example, which we applaud, is the Wales railway franchise that was awarded to a private consortium. This included significant job creation including train manufacturing in Newport, home office and engineering jobs in Pontypridd.</p> <p>Our policy is to prioritise the needs of businesses whose head offices are located in Wales, ensuring that they have the appropriate support from councils, infrastructure providers, educational institutions and funding bodies to pursue their trading activities within Wales successfully.</p> <p>However we shall <i>not</i> try to 'pick winners', nor smother small businesses with intrusive help and advice that they have not asked for.</p> <p>We support the conscious building up of a 'Brand Cymru' to draw attention to agricultural products and manufactured goods of Welsh origin.</p>	<p>Hence in particular, operating profits from Welsh companies would only be taxable when paid as dividends to their owners or shareholders, and would automatically be tax-free if reinvested into the business. This is in complete contrast to the current UK system, where profits can be drawn as dividends without paying full income tax but are subject to Corporation Tax unless specifically exempted (for example, via the highly bureaucratic system of claiming R&D tax credits).</p> <p>Dividends withdrawn would be regarded as income and taxed at the same flat rate as salary income.</p> <p>We believe that this would encourage organic growth of Welsh-owned companies with business owners and shareholders incentivised to seek steady growth in order to enhance the value of their assets over the long term. Indeed, investing in a Welsh company would then offer many of the benefits of investing in an offshore tax-haven, in that asset values would be allowed to grow untaxed and taxes would only become due upon 'repatriation' of that value.</p> <p>We shall review environmental legislation, particularly that relating to CO₂ emissions, and modify or repeal regulations that unfairly penalise Welsh manufacturers while having the perverse effect of driving up CO₂ emissions globally.</p>
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Access to Employment Opportunities

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>There are many practical impediments that prevent people who are able to work from taking up employment, especially if they are from very disadvantaged backgrounds. One, as mentioned in the 'Welfare and Taxation' section, is reticence about losing benefits. Another is the fact that many trades, even relatively low-to-moderate skill ones, are effectively 'closed shops' because of the need to be certified prior to working.</p> <p>For example, programmes such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme - ostensibly set up to provide assurance that manual workers are qualified in their trades and aware of relevant health-and-safety legislation - have in effect become occupational licensing schemes that place significant barriers in the way of people wanting to join or re-join the workforce.</p>	<p>It is our ambition, simply put, to get Wales back to work by removing every impediment that stands in the way of people taking up employment, upskilling themselves or retraining in order to enter emerging employment sectors.</p> <p>We shall investigate the jobs market diligently to find where such impediments lie, and do all we can to eliminate them. For example, in cases where workers currently require certification to work on government projects but it cannot be demonstrated that such certification really is essential, then the requirement will be removed.</p> <p>Where certification really is essential to ensure the safety of workers or customers, then we shall facilitate or, if necessary, subsidise the process to ensure that no-one is denied access to the jobs market because they lack the ability to make an up-front capital investment in certification.</p>	<p>We believe that the actions described in the previous column are all within the competencies of the Welsh Government under current legislation.</p>

The Post-COVID Work Environment

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>The move to ‘working from home wherever possible’ – which is often the case for a wide range of ‘white-collar’ occupations – is likely to become a permanent feature of the economy even after the COVID epidemic is finally over.</p> <p>This could have both positive and negative consequences in Wales. On the plus side, if young people who would normally need to move to cities – often outside Wales – to get employment can instead stay in Wales and work remotely, then it could stem the ‘brain drain’ and result in much more high-value employment in otherwise deprived areas of Wales.</p> <p>However, in general, working from home can be difficult for young people with little experience and who often live in cramped or noisy environments. It is much easier for people who are established in their careers and can afford larger houses. There is therefore a significant risk that large numbers of such people</p>	<p>We shall do all we can to make the positive outcomes for likely and the negative outcomes less likely.</p> <p>We shall seek ways to provide young people in ‘working from home’ situations with options where they can find suitable workspaces together with appropriate support and mentoring. For example, ‘shared workspace’ areas could be attached to universities and/or colleges of further and higher education, with academic and IT support staff in attendance.</p> <p>Care would be taken that such facilities would not inadvertently compete with existing private-sector provision of shared workspaces such as Indycube, though these tend to be primarily focused upon helping people who are starting their own businesses rather than those working remotely for existing businesses.</p> <p>We shall withdraw subsidies to new Broadband connections under the existing Welsh Government “Access Broadband Cymru” scheme in cases where the premises is a private residence and the owner or tenant was not previously resident in Wales for at least one year.</p> <p>We shall fast-track planning applications for change-of-use that involve the conversion of commercial property to residential use, always subject to retaining the</p>	<p>Our concerns over an influx of people from outside Wales buying up larger houses in rural areas, in order to use as ‘working from home’ bases – and pricing out local buyers in the process - can only fully be addressed in the context of a coherent immigration and residency policy as befits an independent country.</p> <p>For more detail of our thinking in this area, see the ‘Immigration and Residency’ section below.</p>

<p>may want to move from urban areas outside Wales to buy property in Wales, further exacerbating existing problems of affordability for local people and dilution of Welsh-speaking communities.</p> <p>There is also a likelihood that a great deal of commercial property in town and city centres may become redundant, leading to losses for investors and the risk of urban decay.</p>	<p>character of the area where this is a valid consideration. See further discussion on this in the 'Housing' section.</p>	
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Regulation of Professional Roles

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>UK regulatory bodies for working professionals, e.g. Doctors, Solicitors, Teachers, have become too big, too unaccountable and too easily motivated by corporate interests.</p>	<p>We shall encourage the establishment of new Welsh regulatory bodies for professionals, with the aim of simplifying the working environment and improving accountability whilst maintaining the same or better standards than those mandated by existing UK bodies.</p>	<p>It is not believed that independence is a prerequisite for putting this policy into practice.</p> <p>However, even after independence, we would seek to ensure that standards of professional regulation in Wales remain commensurate with those in England and elsewhere, so that the ability of Welsh professionals to work outside Wales is not hindered and – plans for increased training within Wales notwithstanding – professionals from outside Wales can fill roles here when necessary.</p>

Transport

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>We are currently the only nation in Europe which lacks a comprehensive internal transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Transport connections within Wales, especially between the north and south, are very poor. The consequences of this are severe, both for the economy and also the health service.</p> <p>While we support the provision of high-quality public transport within and between urban centres, we recognise that over large parts of the country where population is sparse the only viable means of transport is road. This will not change, even with the advent of next-generation technologies such as driverless vehicles.</p>	<p>We are committed to investment in Wales's roads, with a particular emphasis on those running north-to-south within Wales.</p> <p>In particular we shall prioritise the development of a 'Powys Spine Road' along the A470 & A483 corridors to provide a modern 2/3 lane road with a series of bypasses to cut the road travel time between the north and south of Wales by at least 1 hour, while improving local accessibility.</p> <p>We advocate peak-hour congestion charging along the M4 east of Newport to discourage daily commuting and alleviate the need for further expansion of this road.</p> <p>We will ensure full devolution of rail network, to remove the ridiculous anomaly of Welsh taxpayers contributing £5 billion towards HS2 for zero benefit, and will use the money saved to invest in a modern rail infrastructure across Wales. In many cases this may include re-opening disused rail routes, particularly in the Valleys, while making use of modern light-rail technology to provide frequent commuter services that widen people's access to employment and companies' access to staff.</p>	<p>We shall continue to prioritise connectedness within Wales over cross-border transport links, in order to create the most efficient possible internal market. This will facilitate trade between Welsh companies and make it easier to find appropriately-skilled staff from within Wales, without difficulty-of-travel being an impediment.</p> <p>Yet we shall ensure that cross-border transport links by road, rail, air and sea remain unimpeded; see the section on Immigration and Residency below.</p>

	<p>In particular we will ensure the reinstatement of the Carmarthen-Aberystwyth railway line and the extension of the Cambrian Coast line northwards, either to Bangor or to connect to the Conwy Valley line in order to create a new north-south train route within Wales.</p> <p>We shall press for the devolution of Air Passenger Duty to Wales and ensure that it is no longer used by the UK government as a way of stunting Cardiff Airport's growth in order to promote that of Bristol.</p>	
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Tourism

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Wales is known the world over for its dramatic landscapes, world-class beaches and astonishingly rich built environment with three UNESCO World Heritage Sites (the castles of Gwynedd, Blaenafon Ironworks and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct). Tourists come from all over the world to enjoy what the country has to offer.</p> <p>Yet the tourism industry in Wales is predominantly based on low-quality, low-value provision. Large caravan sites blight the landscape in many coastal areas, while people towing their own caravans or motorhomes clog up the already-poor road system during the summer months. A high proportion of self-catering accommodation means that people come from over the border bringing their own provisions with them, depriving local shops and restaurants of trade.</p> <p>Jobs in the tourism sector are predominantly low-wage and seasonal, and often done by</p>	<p>We do not wish to see Wales becoming unwelcoming, but we seek a wholesale shift of focus within the Welsh tourism industry away from quantity and towards quality.</p> <p>We want to see fewer tourists overall but paying more per head, in return for enjoying a higher-quality experience. We want to see the benefits of tourism kept within the communities where tourists stay, with excellent service provided by locally-owned companies and staffed by local people who do their jobs professionally and with pride.</p> <p>Though raising taxes does not come naturally to us as a party, this is an area where an exception must be made.</p> <p>We will introduce a tourist tax at a flat rate of initially two pounds per person per night on all overnight stays in hotels, caravan parks, campsites, self-catering accommodation and ‘room lets’ (such as AirBnB) where the room is not the guest’s main residence (the only exception to this being student rooms in University towns, let to students during termtime).</p> <p>As also mentioned below in the section on Housing, we will apply a 500% council tax surcharge on all properties not being used year-round as a main residence.</p>	<p>We believe that most of these objectives can be achieved within the current powers of the Welsh Government.</p> <p>However we believe that independence will be hugely beneficial for the Welsh tourist industry, raising the profile of Wales in the international market and attracting higher-spending visitors from further afield.</p>

<p>migratory workers rather than local people in any case.</p> <p>At the other end of the scale, many people from over the border buy second homes in Wales to use as holiday-homes for themselves or to let them out during the summer months. This freezes local people out of the housing market and leaves many small towns and villages like 'ghost towns' out-of-season, with many properties empty and the communities unable to sustain viable shops, schools, cultural activities or centres of employment.</p>	<p>We will also introduce a licensing scheme for those offering accommodation, based on the systems by which public houses are licensed and that premises serving food are inspected, with training being provided to ensure that accommodation providers are aware of best practices in providing clean and hygienic accommodation and periodic inspections to ensure that laundry and cleaning is being carried out to an adequate standard.</p> <p>We shall introduce a permit system in sensitive areas subject to congestion, such as the areas around Snowdon, Storey Arms and Pistyll Rhaeadr; eliminating parking provision except for local residents with permits, and requiring visitors to use park-and-ride services.</p>	
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Environment and Natural Resources

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Wales is blessed with an abundance of natural energy sources, but they are exploited in ways that do not bring proper benefits to the people who live near them or to the country as a whole.</p> <p>Onshore windfarms, for which landowners receive huge subsidies, blight the landscape even in areas</p>	<p>Gwlad supports a diversity of energy sources including renewables, but we are opposed to onshore wind because of its disproportionate disruption to landscapes and communities. Likewise we shall not subsidise the use of agricultural land for solar farms, but will encourage the adoption of solar energy in urban environments. We are very supportive of offshore renewable power generation, whether wind, wave or tidal, seeing Wales as being particularly richly endowed with these resources.</p>	<p>The fact that Wales – even after the demise of its coal industry - remains a significant net exporter of natural resources, including both energy and water, would provide financial markets with valuable reassurance about the viability of an independent Welsh currency (see 'Currency and Constitution', below) and guard against excessive devaluation and hyperinflation.</p> <p>We would follow the lead of Norway and other successful small-but-resource-rich countries to ensure</p>

<p>where there is little wind and no viable connection to the National Grid.</p> <p>Tidal and hydroelectric power sources go unexploited through lack of investment and political will.</p> <p>Meanwhile Welsh homes and businesses pay much more for their water and electricity than most of Europe - in the case of water, much more than the places in England to which it is exported.</p>	<p>We support investment in modern alternative technologies such as hydrogen technology as a way of storing, transporting and consuming energy generated by renewable methods.</p> <p>Gwlad are not anti-nuclear in principle, but we are opposed to large projects such as Wylfa B would have been, that offer poor value for money and provide insufficient benefit to local people. We cautiously welcome the plans that have been announced for Rolls Royce to manufacture Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SNMRs) at Trawsfynydd, subject to no direct tax subsidy being provided and local workers and suppliers benefitting from it.</p> <p>Gwlad do not subscribe to the 'Nimby' view of objecting to every potential development and recognise that our rural communities are also our workplaces and homes - not just an idyllic landscape to be preserved for tourists. Instead we firmly believe in sustainable rural development providing local jobs and services, but subject to good planning controls to prevent over-development and abuse.</p> <p>Within those constraints we will encourage the extraction and use of coal and gas where this can be accomplished cleanly and safely. Likewise we shall encourage the use of wood from sustainable woodlands as domestic fuel in areas of low population density - but not in industrial or commercial contexts, where there is evidence that the RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) scheme that was introduced in 2011 has led to</p>	<p>that demand for Welsh natural resources does not in fact have the perverse effect of leading to an over-valued currency which in turn would make it harder for Welsh business to export.</p>
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	<p>environmental damage through the use of wood from unsustainable sources and/or contaminated scrap.</p> <p>Gwlad recognises that our abundant water resources have been heavily exploited over the years for little or no financial gain. We propose to take all water assets within Wales into Welsh public ownership, notably those reservoirs and associated infrastructure operated by Severn Trent, and to place them under the control of existing 'not-for-profit' Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. Exports of water would continue to England without restriction, but will be sold for a fair economic value.</p> <p>In general terms, we are more concerned with the damage that the global climate can do to Wales than the damage that Wales can do to the global climate; and we believe that it is better to spend modest amounts on sea defences, river dredging and water transportation (to assure supply in times of drought) than to spend much larger amounts on bringing forward 'carbon neutrality' by a few years. We believe that the market will take care of this in any case over the course of the 21st Century, as technologies such as better battery storage and hydrogen fuel cells make clean, low-carbon energy more economically attractive than fossil fuels for the vast majority of applications.</p>	
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Policing and Justice

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>A high proportion of crime in Wales is committed by people from over the border; whether this be due to 'county lines' drug-dealing networks, or by the resettlement of people with long-standing drug or alcohol problems from large English cities to areas of Wales with low-cost housing, especially rented accommodation.</p> <p>A high proportion of prisoners in Wales are from outside the country, especially at HMP Berwyn in Wrexham. This increases the likelihood that a proportion of such ex-offenders will settle in the area when they have been released.</p> <p>Wales lacks any women's prison facilities, so women prisoners from Wales have to be accommodated long distances from their homes and families.</p>	<p>We will ensure the full devolution of policing and justice and the establishment of a Welsh Jurisdiction to bring Wales into line with Scotland and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>We are committed to establishing a national police force, 'Heddlu Cymru' to oversee law and order enforcement; protecting members of the public and their property; maintaining law and order in local areas; preventing crime; investigating crime; and reducing the fear of crime by keeping the peace and providing a better quality of life for all citizens, reflecting the underlying meaning of the Welsh word 'Heddlu', namely 'Peace force'.</p> <p>Heddlu Cymru will provide national support for policing but with the delivery of policing conducted by regional services aligned with local government regions.</p> <p>Gwlad rejects the development of 'Super Prisons' which are mainly used to house prisoners from other areas of the UK. The Welsh prison network should be of a size to serve Welsh needs and not as an overflow for other areas of the UK.</p> <p>We will work through local councils to ensure that prisoners accommodated in existing Welsh prisons return to their home areas after release.</p>	<p>We shall oversee the maintenance and further development of an autonomous Welsh legal system, based on the principles of Common Law, maintaining the rights of individuals in the face of state power and in particular <i>habeas corpus</i> and the right to a public trial.</p> <p>We shall recognise no legal authority higher than the Welsh Supreme Court, and no Welsh citizen shall be extradited to any other country without the approval of that court.</p>

Housing

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>There is a shortage of social housing in Wales but Local Development Plans do not address this need, instead focussing on development of commuter estates. At the same time, there is a glut of empty properties and second homes, particularly in our rural areas, which reduces the supply of homes available for local people.</p> <p>There is also a paucity of good-quality privately-rented accommodation, despite the fact that this sort of housing has an important role to play in a well-functioning economy – providing flexible accommodation to individuals and families who neither want to live in social housing nor want to commit to home ownership.</p>	<p>We shall actively discourage the use of homes as ‘second homes’ or holiday lets by introducing a licensing scheme similar to that which currently applies to HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation). In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any home not intended for year-round occupancy by its owner or a single legal tenant (under a legally binding tenancy agreement) – defined as being the owner or tenant’s permanent address for tax purposes - shall require a licence from the local council. Such a licence will run for a fixed term of a maximum of five years – shorter at the discretion of the council – and in any case require renewal when the ownership of the property changes hands. An application for a new licence or the renewal of a licence shall automatically be refused if the number of similarly licensed premises in the Ward exceeds 5% of the total housing stock. During the validity period of such a licence, a 500% Council Tax surcharge shall apply. These rules shall be enforced by local authorities, who shall in turn be legally required to do so. Failure to comply shall be sanctioned in similar ways to existing rules on violating HMO conditions. 	<p>We shall seek to manage the economy in such a way that house prices no longer become disconnected from earnings and that the benefits of home ownership become and remain accessible to a much wider cross-section of society – always keeping in mind that a house should be first seen first and foremost as a home and not an investment.</p> <p>We perceive that the principal reason for the explosion in house prices in the UK and many other Western economies over the previous three decades is an excess in money supply provoked by artificially low interest rates, themselves being partly a result of excessive government borrowing. Putting it simply, by flooding the market with too much money, governments have reduced its value relative to property.</p> <p>We propose (see section on ‘Currency and Constitution’, below) that an independent Wales should have its own currency managed through its own Central Bank, and that stability of housing costs should be one of the criteria applied to the way in which interest rates are set and money is released into the economy.</p>

	<p>These rules shall not apply to holiday lets comparable to the French system of 'Gîtes' whereby the property being let is on land which is owned by the landlord and contiguous to their own permanent dwelling.</p> <p>We shall reform laws and regulations relating to private rented accommodation; removing what is currently perceived to be a bias in favour of tenants, that discourages landlords from providing and investing in their properties. Instead, we shall encourage the provision of long term leases which carry an obligation upon the tenant to share properly in the maintenance of the property and give the tenant freedom to alter or improve the property for their own needs with the landlord's consent. If a landlord wishes to sell a property, then a sitting tenant should have the right of first refusal and lenders should take account of the tenant's rent payment history in assessing their creditworthiness. Legal obligations upon a landlord to maintain the property to a decent standard during the course of a lease, enforceable by court order, shall be balanced by a more straightforward eviction procedure for tenants who demonstrably fail to comply with the terms of a lease.</p> <p>We shall seek ways to incentivise the maintenance and upgrading of existing housing stock in preference to performing new builds wherever possible, so that the unique characters of Welsh villages, towns and cities are preserved. For example, we shall remove the inconsistency whereby currently VAT is payable on renovations to older buildings whereas new builds are exempt.</p>	
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	<p>Where new dwellings are necessary, we shall encourage the conversion of existing buildings into apartments, and seek that any brand new dwellings that are erected are both designed and built to the highest standards, for example by holding architectural competitions for public-sector housing and making aesthetic appeal a consideration when deciding planning permission for privately-funded buildings.</p> <p>We shall establish a Wales National Housing Agency with responsibilities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessing the needs of Wales in regards to housing across all sectors, and providing guidance and instruction to local authorities when preparing Local Development Plans (LDP) - replacing the role of the Planning Inspectorate in this regard. ● Regulating the multiple third sector agencies and housing associations currently operating in Wales. ● Acting as the central funding body for sustainable social housing developments in Wales ensuring that housing needs of locals are prioritised and delivered effectively. 	
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Property Tax Reform

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
The way commercial and residential property is currently taxed is complex, hard to calculate and often bears little relation to the true value	We shall enact the reforms to Leasehold residential property recommended by the Law Commission in their report released on 21st July 2020 , making it significantly easier and cheaper for Leaseholders to acquire the	We believe that most of the reforms suggested in the previous column can be enacted by the Senedd under the new powers granted to it by the Wales Act 2017,

<p>of the property or the occupier's ability to pay.</p> <p>By disincentivising developments that might otherwise promote economic growth, these tax rules act as a drag on the economy as a whole.</p> <p>Abuses of the Leasehold system cause many people to be trapped in properties that are hard to sell, which besides being fundamentally unjust is also a drag on economic growth.</p> <p>Supply of housing is restricted by the practice of developers purchasing land for development but then doing nothing with the land, holding it in a 'land bank' which prevents the land from being developed by others.</p> <p>The current system of Council Tax on residential property, hurriedly introduced in the 1990s as a replacement for the unpopular Community Charge ('Poll Tax'), is a blunt instrument that does not correlate tax payments well with either ability to pay or the value of the property taxed.</p>	<p>Freehold on their property. Ultimately we would aim to eliminate Leasehold as a form of tenure, as has already been done in Scotland.</p> <p>On commercial property, we shall phase out Business Rates and replace them with a Land Tax, as recommended by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in their report "Tax by Design" dated September 2011. This will be assessed with reference only to the value of the land on which the property is built and the class of planning permission that the land has.</p> <p>Agricultural land shall be exempt, but the Land Tax shall become payable by the owner of the Freehold from the point at which planning permission is granted. This will discourage the building up of land banks and ensure that landowners take reasonable steps to maximise the value of their land, or sell it on to others who can make better use of it if they are unable.</p> <p>For domestic property, we shall replace Council Tax by a combination of two new charges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Residential Land Tax, calculated as a percentage of the value of the land on which the property is built (excluding the value of the property itself) and payable by the owner of the Freehold. - A Housing Services Tax, calculated as a percentage of the notional rental value (or in the case of rented accommodation, the <i>actual</i> rental value) of the property and payable by the tenant or owner-occupier. 	<p>but any that can't shall have to be deferred until independence.</p>
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	It is intended that for most properties the combined value of these two taxes would not exceed the existing Council Tax due upon the property.	
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Government and Democracy

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>The establishment of the Welsh Government based on the Westminster model has not worked well, with government functions now simply centralised in Cardiff instead of London.</p> <p>The devolved Welsh Government has acknowledged the need to have a visible presence outside Cardiff, and has built some very prestigious (and expensive) buildings in other parts of Wales; yet these facilities are under-utilised and most people have little idea of what goes on in them.</p>	<p>We believe in establishing a more decentralised structure with government departments distributed across Wales.</p> <p>We also need to make our government more participative and inclusive, and we propose to introduce a ‘digital democracy’ which will allow people to be consulted and vote directly on a wide range of issues.</p> <p>The current system of 22 local ‘unitary’ authorities, together with various overlapping regional bodies, is inefficient, ineffective and unaccountable. Similarly there are too many local councillors with little real responsibility.</p> <p>We believe in establishing 6 regional bodies covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South East ● South Central ● South West ● Central & West ● North East ● North West 	<p>We would like to see real power located in Mid and North Wales, and to that end would propose a governmental settlement in which not only are the various arms of government formally separated into Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, but that these functions take place at different permanent locations so that, like South Africa for example, Wales will have not just one Capital City, but three.</p> <p>We’d propose retaining Cardiff, being the largest city and most important commercial centre, as the Judicial Capital where the Welsh Supreme Court sits. We would also seek to maintain the city’s status as Wales’s principal financial centre, with the Central Bank located there.</p> <p>We’d propose that the Legislature – the Senedd itself – be relocated to the Sarn Mynach buildings in Llandudno Junction.</p> <p>We’d propose that the Executive – ministerial offices including that of the First Minister – be located in the Rhodfa Padarn buildings in Aberystwyth. Aberystwyth</p>

	<p>These regions will take responsibility for all local government services within the region, including education, health etc. Each region shall be controlled by 40-60 elected full-time Commissioners, elected by proportional representation.</p> <p>Existing regional bodies such as health boards shall be restructured to follow the same regional boundaries.</p> <p>We also propose to strengthen our Community Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - merging them where appropriate to form larger natural communities - giving them enhanced consultation powers as well as additional powers to deliver a limited range of local services. 	<p>would therefore become the <i>de facto</i> Capital City for practical purposes.</p> <p>It should be noted that we envisage the use of existing government buildings for all these functions, and we would oppose the expenditure of large sums of money to develop additional government buildings in these locations. We would, however, hope that in due course this geographical layout would lead to improvements in the transport infrastructure that connects these centres.</p> <p>Finally, we would investigate the possibility of a role, probably ceremonial, for Machynlleth – the fact that this is where Owain Glyndŵr’s parliament was located is very significant to us. While we cannot justify the expense of developing a centre of government here, we would nevertheless encourage its use as the location, for example, of swearing-in ceremonies when a new government is inaugurated.</p>
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Culture

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
Even though the long-term decline in the proportion of Welsh-speakers has been arrested, Welsh-speaking communities continue to wither as younger people move away seeking employment and housing, to be replaced by wealthier English people	<p>Our distinctive language and culture has kept Wales alive and prevented us from being swallowed up into a ‘Greater England’. We firmly believe that we must maintain, encourage and widen this cultural distinction as one of our unique selling points.</p> <p>Even so, we must be clearer than ever that Wales belongs to all its people, whether Welsh-speaking or</p>	<p>We aim to create a truly bilingual society where everyone in Wales has the ability to speak Welsh but can choose for themselves what language they speak from day to day.</p> <p>People who want to speak Welsh should be able to walk up to anyone in Wales, or any private- or public-sector service providers, and use Welsh with a reasonable</p>

<p>in search of retirement or holiday homes.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in towns and cities Welsh is becoming an urban middle-class language, sometimes causing resentment among non-Welsh speakers who perceive that Welsh-speakers are given unfair advantages over them.</p>	<p>not, while making it as easy as possible for families to reclaim their Welsh-speaking heritage and for incomers to assimilate.</p> <p>We also recognise that ‘Welsh culture’ goes beyond just the Welsh language and encompasses music (classical and popular) and English-language literature, theatre and entertainment as well.</p> <p>Our guiding principle shall be “Welsh – our national language; English – our common language”.</p> <p>Welsh medium education will be extended to every primary school in Wales, initially in existing Welsh speaking areas (Y Fro Gymraeg) and ultimately into majority English speaking areas over as short a period as can be achieved.</p> <p>Similarly all secondary schools shall be Welsh medium to age 14, and then bilingual.</p> <p>This is to be implemented progressively following implementation at primary school level, with all secondary schools ultimately becoming Welsh medium. Provision shall be made for supporting English medium education but not including English-only schools. In order to survive and flourish, the language must be a living thing and not just an academic exercise. We strongly believe in maximising the use of Welsh in daily speech, and in interaction with both public services and private organisations.</p>	<p>expectation that they will be understood and responded to in that language.</p> <p>Likewise, people who would prefer to use English should be free to do so in their day-to-day lives without fearing discrimination or lack-of-respect.</p> <p>We aspire that Welsh culture (including that which is expressed through the medium of English) be recognised around the world, and become an important aspect of Wales’s ‘soft power’ in its interactions with other countries.</p>
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Heritage

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Wales's diverse, rich and cosmopolitan cultural heritage has witnessed a great deal of neglect.</p> <p>In schools the history of Wales seems to focus only on two areas, the Romans and Normans. The scope should be expanded to examine the waves of other peoples that have occupied Wales, including obviously its native inhabitants that go back over 10,000 years and made it their home.</p> <p>Moreover it is that diversity that gave us the period of enlightenment after the Roman period and before the Norman, that nurtured great leaders such as Rhodri Mawr, Hywel Dda and Llewellyn the Great.</p> <p>We should not as a nation be only thinking just along the lines of artefacts, and building remains, but also other aspects of our culture. Denmark has seen the importance of the 'community tree', where trees that have been marker's</p>	<p>We shall strive to protect Wales's physical heritage, reforming Cadw and widening its remit to protect archaeological sites and living organisms.</p> <p>We shall strengthen the legal protections applying to scheduled ancient monuments and other sites of note, making it clear in particular that developers who impinge upon such sites shall be held financially liable for doing so.</p>	<p>We believe that most, perhaps all, of what needs to be addressed under this heading falls within the existing competencies of the Welsh Government.</p>

for events are protected. In Wales we have similar living organisms such as the Oak at the Gate of the Dead at Chirk, but in the time since Denmark passed its protective laws we have lost many of our 2,000 year old yews, and 1,000 year old oaks, such as the Pontfadog Oak which was lost without protection in 2013.		
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Media

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Wales receives scarce coverage from the London-based media, while what little Welsh media exists is largely foreign-owned and of very poor quality.</p> <p>This results in the population being very poorly informed about Welsh current affairs – for example, not realising that the NHS in Wales is run by the Welsh government rather than from London – and has enabled the Labour-run administration in Cardiff to get away with shocking incompetence and mismanagement with very little scrutiny.</p>	<p>We believe in the immediate transfer of responsibility for broadcasting and media from England to Wales and the development of a distinctive Welsh news service. We will encourage the establishment of national media outlets in Welsh and English, and increase the amount of Welsh news and current affairs broadcast on television and radio. We will also encourage development of new media channels.</p>	<p>We expect that independence would largely resolve this problem, since there would no longer be any confusion over where responsibility lies and everyone would know that for news affecting Wales they would need to consult Welsh media.</p> <p>We would not advocate the creation of a new state broadcaster – a Welsh equivalent of the BBC funded by a licence fee. Rather, we would privatise the existing BBC Wales organisation and encourage them to compete with other news outlets commercially, while also encouraging them to produce entertainment and drama programmes set in Wales for export to other countries (see section on ‘Culture’, above).</p>

Agriculture

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Governments in both London and Cardiff are lukewarm about the value of the agricultural economy, seeing food production as subservient to management of the rural landscape for the benefit of visitors and incomers.</p> <p>Brexit presents real threats to the Welsh agricultural economy in terms of potential tariff barriers to European markets; while at the same time opening up real opportunities to export agricultural produce to the rest of the world, as New Zealand is doing very successfully. However, Welsh farmers often lack access to capital and expertise in order to be able to benefit from these opportunities.</p>	<p>Gwlad holds that the primary purpose of Welsh agriculture is the production of food, to the highest environmental and welfare standards. We believe in the promotion of a thriving rural economy providing high-value opportunities for those who live and work in it.</p> <p>We oppose the wholesale planting of vast tracts of trees taking out complete farms and mountains, but we support planting of native trees for environmental benefit, shelter belts, nature corridors, the stabilisation of old coal and slag tips, and flooding control.</p> <p>We shall jealously guard the reputation of Welsh agricultural produce and insist on 'Brand Cymru' being used consistently for Welsh products, giving traceability. We seek to encourage food produced in Wales to also be processed in Wales, adding as much value as possible as close to the source as possible, and to this end we seek to create a single Welsh ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food responsible for the whole process 'from gate to plate'.</p> <p>The UK government should negotiate tariff free access in both directions with Europe.</p>	<p>With independence it will become possible to market 'Brand Cymru' much more aggressively in international trade, and we shall seek to learn from other countries with strong agricultural exports – such as New Zealand in particular – in order to maximise the value of Welsh agriculture and its contribution to the economy as a whole.</p> <p>We shall encourage investment into Welsh farms to make land more productive without compromising environmental standards: for example by providing infrastructure to support the use of tracking technology to locate wild animals such as foxes and badgers and so keep livestock safely away from them without having to resort to large-scale culling.</p>

	<p>Gwlad notes that the needs of the industry in England are quite different from those of Wales, and this needs to be recognised now with all PGI (Protected Geographic Indicators) and PDO (Products of Designated Origin) being maintained. Whatever trade deals are agreed with other countries, food imported into the UK and on to Wales must be of the same standard environmentally and ethically, GM free, hormone free, or of superior quality to home-grown products.</p> <p>We welcome the establishment of Wales's first school of veterinary medicine in Aberystwyth, but would like to see its offering expanded to provide full five-year courses rather than just the first two years.</p> <p>Additionally, we seek to promote the role of colleges and lifelong learning to support young entrants and older change-of-direction newcomers, teaching both traditional methods and innovative practices including use of IT and advanced environmental sensing technologies.</p> <p>We shall actively promote the share farming scheme, allowing opportunity for new entrants without the capital to buy and helping to reduce the average age of active farmers.</p> <p>We shall ensure that agricultural land remains exempt from the Land Tax provisions that we intend to introduce for commercial and residential property, as discussed in the 'Property Tax Reform' section of this document.</p>	
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Immigration and Residency

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Many areas of Wales, alike in the Welsh-speaking regions of the West and the industrial regions of the North-East and South-East, are seeing local people forced out of their communities as house prices become unaffordable under pressure from retirees, holiday-home owners and commuters from over the border.</p> <p>Many of these incomers, particularly in rural areas, are older people who place high demands on the health and social care services. Yet they paid no tax or national insurance in Wales during their working lives and, although often wealthy in capital terms, have low current incomes and therefore pay little tax in the present.</p>	<p>We believe that our proposed 500% council tax surcharge on second and subsequent homes, along with our plans for bringing the adult social care system back into line with England's instead of being significantly more generous, will go some way towards addressing the worst issues currently faced by Welsh communities, especially in the more rural parts of the country.</p> <p>However, these are issues which are very hard to address without independence and form some of the strongest arguments in favour of it.</p>	<p>We propose that Wales adopt a policy on Immigration and Residency along the following lines, post-independence and to the greatest extent actionable in the meantime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete freedom of movement with unrestricted, document-free travel across all land and sea borders. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No restrictions to be placed on English or Irish residents commuting to jobs in Wales or vice versa. ○ No tolls or customs to be placed at land or sea borders. ● Welsh companies to bear responsibility for correct import/export documentation and payment of any tolls or customs applicable on individual transactions, over a threshold to be determined (likely to be similar to the current UK duty-free threshold of £390). It is anticipated that this will be no more burdensome than current self-assessment requirements for VAT and Corporation Tax. ● The introduction of rules on residency broadly similar to those currently in force in the Channel Islands. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Welsh citizens to have an unrestricted right to lease or buy property anywhere within Wales (though they too will be subject to the

		<p>proposed council tax surcharges on second and subsequent residential properties)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-citizens to have the right to lease or buy property subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The property itself having been approved for leasing or purchase by non-citizens ■ The non-citizen having received permission to work in or retire to Wales. <p>We will not allow property to be bought by people from outside Wales who do not intend to reside in it legitimately or carry out commercial business within it.</p> <p>○ Penalties for non-compliance with these residency rules to be applied to property owners who lease or sell property in violation of them.</p> <p>The philosophy behind this approach is that rules and restrictions are applied not to physical movements of people or goods, but to commercial transactions. This shifts the burden of enforcement onto those who are already responsible for enforcing other legal duties such as payment of VAT, corporation tax, council tax or stamp duty. It is not intended or expected that these rules will add appreciably to that burden.</p> <p>Some of the above assumes a concept of Welsh Citizenship. The full qualifications for Welsh Citizenship will be worked out a later time with reference to best practices from other small, open countries such as</p>
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		<p>Switzerland or Singapore. Even so, they are likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic right to citizenship for anyone born in Wales or born elsewhere as the child of at least one parent who was themselves eligible for Welsh citizenship. • Right to apply for citizenship granted to anyone who has had continuous taxable employment in Wales, or been married to another Welsh citizen, for a certain period. • New citizens to be subject to a test for Welsh language proficiency and knowledge of Welsh history and culture: but this test would be waived for people who qualify 'automatically'. <p>All Welsh residents (including non-citizens living in Wales by permission as described in the previous section) would be obliged to pay the Flat Tax on all income; only citizens would be eligible to receive the Citizens' Income.</p>
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Defence

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
Wales contributes through its taxes to the UK defence budget, even though the UK's defence assets are disproportionate and wholly inappropriate to a small country such as Wales with no ambitions to	We recognise the value of the defence industry to the Welsh economy, with major firms such as General Dynamics in Oakdale, Airbus Defence & Space in Newport and Qioptiq in St. Asaph, all of which have a thriving export trade to the US and other countries besides the UK MoD. We shall encourage this to continue and support expansion of this industry where	We would assert Wales's right, as an independent country, unconditionally to defend its land, sea, air and cyber borders. In practice, though, our preferred way of doing this will always be through diplomacy rather than force.

<p>be a major international military force.</p> <p>Despite its contributions to the UK defence budget, UK military spending in Wales is modest and consists mainly of the maintenance of large bases such as RAF Valley and SENTA in Sennybridge, which produce few benefits for local people. In contrast, the South West of England has significantly higher spending on defence-oriented manufacturing and technology, producing many more benefits for their local economy.</p>	<p>possible, though like elsewhere in industry this shall be by upskilling the workforce and improving infrastructure rather than by providing direct cash subsidies to companies.</p> <p>We shall encourage the maximum possible participation of Welsh companies in the defence supply chain, particularly where this relates to existing military bases within Wales's borders.</p>	<p>We envisage that an independent Wales would take possession of UK MoD assets within its borders, as mandated by the Vienna Conventions.</p> <p>While Wales would then cease contributing to the rUK defence budget, it would maintain a modest non-nuclear military force of its own, with an emphasis upon air and sea defence to secure our coasts and ports against smugglers, traffickers and those who may be tempted to see Wales as a 'back door' to the island of Great Britain, as the French did in 1797. No-one wants to see a Russian nuclear submarine in the Cleddau Estuary.</p> <p>In particular, this would mean the creation of one or more naval bases on the Welsh coast, since none currently exist. Somewhere on the Cleddau Estuary would be the most obvious location for one, though Swansea in South Wales, and Holyhead and/or Mostyn in North Wales, could also be possibilities.</p> <p>We would also seek to maintain a small land army, recognising among other things the uses of such an institution in emergency relief and training young people with challenging backgrounds. Such a force could also participate in humanitarian missions overseas, as the armies of other small countries such as Ireland, Norway and Finland regularly do.</p> <p>By default we envisage that Wales would remain a member of NATO; but like membership of other supranational institutions, we'd propose that this be a matter for a referendum in due course.</p>
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Relations with the European Union

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>EU membership remains a contentious issue with a substantial proportion of people who support Welsh independence being reluctant to see the United Kingdom leaving the EU, and in favour of a future independent Wales re-joining the EU.</p>	<p>It is a simple fact that the Welsh government will have no meaningful input to the relationship between the EU and the UK that forms in the coming years, the legal aspects of which will in any case be largely settled by the Senedd elections of May 2021.</p> <p>Even so we will strive to keep Wales's profile clearly visible within the countries of the EU, facilitating exports to the EU by Welsh agricultural and manufacturing enterprises at every opportunity.</p> <p>We shall nevertheless also seek to seize the global opportunities offered by Brexit, noticing and hoping to emulate the huge success of New Zealand in expanding its global trade since its privileged access to the UK market was withdrawn in 1974.</p> <p>We shall pay particular attention to supporting trade through the international ferry ports at Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke, recognising their importance to the West Wales economy and seeking "free port" status to encourage high-value industry in their vicinities.</p>	<p>We recognise that a clear majority of Welsh voters backed leaving the EU in the 2016 referendum, and the subsequent general elections of 2017 and 2019 saw a continuing swing away from 'Remain-oriented' parties towards 'Leave-oriented' parties.</p> <p>In view of likely developments in coming years, such as increasingly tight EU integration and an insistence that any new member states adopt the Euro as their currency, it seems to us unlikely that a time will come when public opinion swings in favour of re-joining; far less do we foresee a time when doing so is likely to be beneficial for the Welsh economy.</p> <p>Even so, we shall not rule out the possibility of a future 're-join' referendum if circumstances change significantly and a compelling argument develops for doing so.</p>

Currency and Constitution

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>The Welsh economy is very different from that of England, and yet we are locked into a currency union with Sterling. Since Sterling's value is determined by England's economy, it often trades on the world currency markets at valuations which are inappropriate for Wales's economy and disadvantages Welsh companies, particularly in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, who seek to export their produce.</p> <p>Paper money and coins comprise one of the many places in daily life where Welsh people and visitors are reminded that the country's Head of State is the British Monarch, which sits uncomfortably with many people who are aware of Wales's early history and how this situation came about.</p>	<p>For as long as Wales remains a part of the United Kingdom there seems no scope to address any of the issues under this heading.</p>	<p>We maintain that independence does not <i>necessarily</i> imply Republicanism, and the two concepts should be kept separate. No-one would argue that other countries who have the British Monarch as Head-of-State – such as Canada, Australia or New Zealand, are not fully independent states that enjoy all the benefits of being so.</p> <p>Our <i>raison d'être</i> is to achieve independence for Wales so that its many economic and cultural benefits can be enjoyed. We suspect, pragmatically, that support for this will be wider than support for republicanism.</p> <p>Even so, we recognise that post-independence it will be appropriate to have a debate - and probably a referendum - about Wales's long-term constitutional structure, including the options of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintaining the current Monarchy - adopting a new Monarchy (Norway-style) - having an Executive President (US- or France-style) - having a non-executive President (Ireland- or Israel-style). <p>In any case, we maintain that meaningful independence involves having our own currency, and to that end we shall establish a Central Bank of Wales issuing a Welsh currency. We propose that the principal unit of currency be called the Hywel, with each Hywel being</p>

		<p>divided into 100 ceiniog. The currency should have 1:1 parity with the Pound Sterling when launched, but thereafter the Bank's remit will be to set interest rates at appropriate levels for maintaining stable inflation while allowing the valuation of the currency to be set by the markets.</p> <p>Following the leads of other countries, in particular Estonia, we shall cautiously evaluate the possibility of holding some Central Bank reserves in cryptocurrencies rather than precious metals, and be sympathetic to the use of cryptocurrencies in the wider economy as the technology matures.</p> <p>The Royal Mint at Llantrisant, which currently manufactures coinage for some 60 countries worldwide, would continue to trade and bid to continue providing Sterling coinage to England as one of its export customers.</p>
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Coalition Government

What is wrong today?	Short term policy – our strategy while working within the Senedd	Long term policy – our aspiration on achieving Independence
<p>Wales has been dominated by the Labour Party at every level of government for at least 100 years.</p> <p>The Labour Party has supplied every First Minister of Wales since the beginning of Devolution in 1999,</p>	<p>Gwlad members of the Senedd shall categorically not, under any circumstances, support the appointment of another First Minister from the Labour Party.</p> <p>With that proviso we shall be open to collaborating with any and all parties represented in the Senedd, in</p>	<p>We recognise that coalition governments are the 'norm' in most democratic countries in the 21st century, and shall encourage the creation of a vibrant multi-party democracy in Wales in which no one party (least of all we ourselves) can dominate the government over an extended period of time.</p>

<p>despite the fact that while always being the largest party Labour has never once won an overall majority.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrats have lent their support to Labour every time, and Plaid Cymru also supported a Labour government in Wales in 2007.</p> <p>The continued rule by a single party for over 20 years has undermined the legitimacy of the Senedd in the eyes of many people, and has led to complacency on the part of the government itself that has in turn contributed to Wales's long-term economic decline.</p>	<p>order to achieve our overall aims as set out in this Manifesto.</p>	<p>To this end, our preferred electoral system is proportional representation by means of Single Transferable Vote (STV).</p> <p>Yet we shall also seek constitutional arrangements whereby coalitions do not lead to instability, and in the event of a coalition breaking down then the formation a different coalition should be the preferred option rather than having an additional General Election before the government's full term has expired.</p>
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OUR PLAN FOR A STRONGER WALES AND A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

GWLAD - THE WELSH INDEPENDENCE PARTY

