**Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioner Manifesto 2021**

**Making Wales Safe and Secure**

**Foreword**

After twenty years of devolution, it makes no sense that our Senedd can make laws but still does not have control over either criminal justice or the proper powers to build a more equal Wales.

Plaid Cymru can see so many opportunities to improve the lives of people in Wales by being able to introduce radical reforms in these fields.

We know the problems - Wales is not an equal society. But we can be and with greater equality comes greater satisfaction, happiness and contentment and fewer social problems.

Plaid Cymru has the ambition to solve these problems by:

1. Fully devolving the criminal justice system - police, prisons, probation and courts so that we can create a fairer and more equal justice system.
2. Prioritising a strategy which reduces the economic and advantage gap by lifting up those people with the least and tackling the discriminations that entrench inequality.
3. Introducing reform of policies around substance use, prioritising treatment and support for those most at risk from harm.

The Police and Crime Commissioner election on the 6th May will be an opportunity to vote for a different way of organising our powers over policing and justice.

A vote for Plaid Cymru offers a Welsh approach to justice and policing, and allows us find solutions to our unique challenges, which will ultimately deliver a more just, equal and safe place for us all to live together.

 **Why we want to devolve policing and justice to Wales**

A major crisis, a frightened population feeling under siege, and a chaotic political atmosphere and ineffective democratic structures — are all present in the Covid-19 pandemic. Add to that the weaknesses of our media and democratic structures, and we have a perfect storm.

At Welsh Government level, we have seen how Wales can choose to do things differently. The impact of the virus on public health, with thousands of lives lost and many more thousands affected has been devastating. While the Tories claim that the different lockdown regulations in Wales are confusing, suggesting Wales should know its place and fall into line, we have largely seen how the people of Wales have listened to regulations made in Wales allowing us to follow our own course in response to this crisis.

This undeniably strengthens the case for further devolution and ultimately the right to decide and create policy across all fields in the future through independence. Had we more control over key policy areas - including welfare, justice and policing - Wales could have gone further to respond to the crisis and mitigate its impact on some of our most vulnerable citizens and communities. Welsh Labour’s reluctance to allow Wales to stand on its own two feet has directly contributed to these lost opportunities.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill currently taking its legislative journey through Westminster is another example of why we need to devolve justice to Wales. The Bill’s raft of significant changes, including new powers to restrict protest and expand stop and search, are certain to exacerbate the existing inequalities in our criminal justice system.

It will crackdown on the right to peaceful protest which has been an essential tool in prompting governmental change – from Black Lives Matter to Extinction Rebellion protests. We all know that the Bill’s stop and search measures will disproportionately target black people.

Devolution of powers over justice is essential to deliver a fairer, more humane and more accountable justice system. It would allow us to implement initiatives such as ‘problem solving courts’ which require the close cooperation of probation and health professionals.

Let’s demand the tools to do things ourselves and build a better system and achieve our vision which matches the needs of citizens. Rather than hovering at the top of the league table for imprisonment, Wales could create a fairer, transformative system that would be a beacon for justice around the world.

**Six Pledges to Make Wales Safer**

1. **Challenge the UK Government to ensure a Fair Funding Formula for Wales**

Police budgets have been slashed and Welsh forces have been hit harder than those in the rest of the UK, due to an unfair funding formula. In some areas, like north Wales, local taxpayers fund over 50 per cent of the police budget in order to make up for the lack of support offered by Westminster, a hefty sum compared to the 30 per cent contributed from local taxpayers in the West Midlands and Northumbria. We will fight for equitable funding which takes into account the additional costs of policing rural areas. We will demand Capital City Funding for Cardiff, money that is already provided for forces in London, Edinburgh and Belfast. We believe the best way of ensuring our police forces are adequately funded and supported is by devolving these services to Wales.

1. **Maintain our strong, local policing services which will respond to crime, and conduct investigations**

Plaid Cymru believe that the police should be visible, transparent, accountable and accessible. We will ensure that the police are better integrated in the local community. This will maintain trust, increase cooperation, reduce fear and ensure that the police are on hand to provide assistance and services to the public. Plaid Cymru believe it is essential that the local community are included and involved in decision-making processes. We will facilitate forums for the police and communities to exchange views on issues of mutual concern. We understand the differences in policing between rural and urban areas. We will ensure that rural communities are aware of who their police officers are and where to access support. We will plan to deploy uniformed staff to respond to the seasonal pressures in rural areas during the summer months when tourism populations are high.

1. **Reduce Crime and Reoffending**

The causes of crime must be addressed. This includes an overhaul of the benefit system, more affordable housing, and an economic policy that will help alleviate poverty.

We know that those people who have suffered four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are 14 times more likely to be a victim of violence and 20 times more likely to have been imprisoned at some point in their life. Plaid Cymru will use a preventative approach drawn from across health, criminal justice, education and other settings to tackle ACEs as they occur and possible criminal behaviour that leads from this. Early intervention will be key to our approach.

1. **Safeguard the Vulnerable and Enhance Victim Support**

We will support victims and reduce domestic abuse and sexual violence by teaching children about respectful relationships. We will ensure that Sexual Assault Referral Centres are properly funded with adequate training for the professionals who work there. We will also ensure that counselling services are available and well-funded because victims of rape and domestic abuse can suffer from a range of issues relating to mental health and drug and alcohol abuse at the same time. We will continue to engage with organisations such as the Anti-Slavery Commissioner to develop a greater understanding and awareness of modern slavery within police forces and with the public.

Over 90 per cent of prisoners in Wales have at least one mental health condition. We will work in partnership with Health Boards to further develop our understanding of the needs associated with mental ill health. Our priority is to support people in crisis, rather than relying on prisons. We will work to support the transition of offenders from prison into Welsh communities, with an emphasis on rehabilitation as key to reducing crime. We will resist moves to increase the number of prison places for men in Wales, and will seek to reduce the imprisonment of women offenders outside Wales whenever possible by supporting alternative sentencing in women’s justice centres.

Plaid Cymru pledge to implement the Victims Code of Practice, including supporting greater victim confidence in giving evidence, thereby increasing conviction rates. We owe it to victims to offer them every support and so we will legislate on the Victims Code of Practice when justice devolution comes.

1. **Tackle Hate Crime**

Victims of hate crime must have the confidence to come forward to report these crimes, safe in the knowledge that they will be treated properly and sympathetically by the police service.

We are committed to combating Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-migrant sentiment, anti-Gypsy, Roma Traveller sentiment, and all forms of racism and bigotry in politics, on our streets, online and in our media. We will provide appropriate support services for victims of hate crime, and scrutinise complaints to the Professional Standards Department concerning victims of hate crime.

To get to grips with hate crime, our Police and Crime Commissioners will:

* Improve training for all its police officers and frontline staff to identify and record hate crimes, better support victims and bring perpetrators to justice;
* Improve confidence in reporting by publicly communicating their commitment to tackling hate crimes and making reporting easier;
* Work with communities most affected by hate crime to build the communities’ confidence in the system.
1. **Create Economic Crime Units**

There are gaps in services for vulnerable people who are exploited by both traditional fraudulent methods and through cyber fraud. Cybercrime is progressing at a fast pace, with new trends constantly emerging. Police forces must keep pace with new technologies, to understand the possibilities they create for criminals and how they can be used as tools for fighting cybercrime. Plaid Cymru will establish Economic Crime Units with investigative capacity for personal and business fraud, giving priority to cases affecting the most vulnerable. We will also establish a Financial Investigation Unit which will increase our capacity to identify and repossess the proceeds of crime. Our police forces will lead campaigns to educate people on protecting themselves from cybercrime and where to seek help if they become a victim.

**Five Years of Achievement 2016-2021**

Police and Crime Commissioners:

* Are the voice of the people in holding the Police Force to account.
* Oversee the delivery of efficient and effective services to reduce crime and reoffending.
* Set the strategic direction for the Police Force, working with partners such as Public Safety Boards and Community Safety Partnerships.

Our Police and Crime Commissioners in North Wales and Dyfed-Powys have worked tirelessly over the past five years. Among their many achievements are:

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| * Developing Cyber Crime Teams to investigate and prevent cybercrime.
* Creating Goleudy in Dyfed-Powys, a single point of access for support services. We want to see a similar service available in all police force areas.
* The NFU using North Wales as a case study for tackling rural crime. Dyfed-Powys police have created schemes such as Farmwatch and Horse Watch to provide crime prevention advice.
* Appointing the UK’s first dedicated modern slavery support officer in North Wales.
* Establishing a mental health triage service in Dyfed-Powys which sees police officers and Hywel Dda Health Board personnel working side-by-side to ensure that those suffering from mental health distress get the right attention and care.
* Launching Checkpoint Cymru in North Wales which diverts low level offenders away from criminal justice.
 | * Using restorative justice approaches in Dyfed-Powys, including face-to-face meetings between victim and perpetrator, resulting in a satisfaction rate of 85 per cent.
* Campaigning for a progressive drug policy with a greater emphasis on harm reduction.
* Receiving public confidence surveys which show a high degree of confidence in both Police Forces.
* Launching a 3-year Early Intervention Fund worth £800,000 with matched funding to support North Wales Police preventative agenda of addressing adverse childhood experiences as an underlying cause of crime.
* Establishing the Onyx team in North Wales to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.
* Restoring CCTV to towns across Dyfed-Powys.
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**Our Policy Approach to Policing and Justice**

**Crime Prevention**

In recent years we have come to understand more about the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and future offending and imprisonment. The Welsh ACEs study at Bangor University has shown that those with four or more ACEs are 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months, 15 times more likely to have committed a violent crime and 20 times more likely to have been imprisoned during their lifetime.

Plaid Cymru believes that a preventative approach with collaboration across health, criminal justice and education is most effective in tackling youth offending. Addressing the underlying causes of crime, such as protecting children from abuse or neglect, and tackling child poverty is proven to reduce criminal behaviour.

Plaid Cymru believes that Wales should adopt a ‘whole system’ policy based on the Scottish model where prevention, early intervention and multidisciplinary support is used to divert children and young people from offending. This is more effective than relying on short custodial sentences that offer limited opportunities for rehabilitation. Social Service Departments should deploy networks of specialist child counsellors. These should be linked to an expanded Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, which includes psychiatric residential accommodation. The local assessment and care of children needs to be integrated and centrally coordinated.

**What we’re doing already…**

North Wales’ **Checkpoint Cymru**  is a scheme which seeks to provide a credible alternative to prosecution by identifying and supporting relevant needs and the ‘critical pathways’ out of crime. It’s aim is to reduce reoffending by 20-30 per cent and offers low-level offenders an chance to sign a contract agreeing to change their lifestyle rather than face prosecution.

**What we’re doing already…**

Dyfed-Powys’ **Offender Diversionary Scheme** enables low-level offenders to access support and guidance to keep them out of the criminal justice system. This was established as a pilot in 2016 and has since expanded. The initiative aims to tackle the root cause of offending and uses a multi-agency approach to offer tailored help and intervention.

**Mental Health**

People who experience mental ill-health should be treated by the health service rather than placed in police custody. Yet people within the criminal justice system are more likely than the general population to suffer from mental health problems. In England and Wales, over 90 per cent of prisoners have at least one of five psychiatric disorders, with 23 per cent of inmates having previously been in contact with mental health services.

Police are often seen as the ‘first emergency service’ for people experiencing a mental health crisis. We will continue to make clear to the Welsh Government that there needs to be an increase in mental health provision within the health service.

We will:

* Work in partnership with Health Boards and other partners to improve the response to people with mental health issues, in particular, our ability to identify vulnerability and target services and support to help people in crisis.
* Raise awareness of mental health issues by supporting local and national campaigns.
* Engage with people with lived experience of mental ill health to improve our understanding of the issues they face.
* Support Chief Constables to ensure that people suffering from mental ill health are treated in a health facility and not detained in custody.
* Continue best practice such as the Blue Light Programme and the Mental Health Triage Services.

**Substance Use**

Plaid Cymru supports the decriminalisation of drug use. The current hard-line approach criminalises citizens who may use drugs medicinally or recreationally without harming others. Criminalising those with an addiction does nothing to help them turn their lives around.

Decriminalisation does not legalise any drug. Instead, it changes the way in which we deal with minor drug possession is dealt with by the authorities and treats users as potentially vulnerable rather than as criminals.

Rather than focusing services on all illicit drug users, we should focus on the relatively small number of people with dependency and address the underlying causes of their misuse with programmes such as Checkpoint Cymru.

Drugs have been decriminalised in Portugal since 2001. This has produced a public health, harm reduction approach, dissuading new drug users and encouraging dependent drug users to enter treatment whilst focusing police resources on those who profit from the drugs trade.

By sending the message that drug users are not criminals, the reform has allowed more users to access the treatment they need.

Furthermore, drug use in Portugal has decreased since the decriminalisation of drugs. The prevalence of drugs is below the EU average and Portugal now has the lowest rate of cannabis use in the EU. Rather than turning more people towards drugs, decriminalisation has allowed people who misuse drugs to receive the treatment they need and reduced the market for criminals.

Decriminalisation has also led to a considerable increase in the number of drugs seized, by allowing the police to redirect their efforts to large-scale operations, rather than ordinary users.

Plaid Cymru will:

* Continue to argue for the decriminalisation of drugs.
* Use diversionary schemes such as Checkpoint Cymru for those convicted of non-violent drug related offences.
* Educate young people on the dangers of using substances, including their links to organised crime that might lead them to a lifestyle of exploitation.
* Identify and dismantle the threat posed by organised crime groups and work with others to disrupt organised crime activity.
* Continue to call on the Home Office to cleanse the criminal records of those cautioned or convicted of drugs possession where there are no aggravating features.

**Community Engagement and Rural Crime**

Plaid Cymru will facilitate forums whereby the police and the community can exchange views on issues of mutual concern. We will continue to encourage proactive face-to-face interaction between the police and the public. We will use local policing officers and Police Community Support Officers policing on foot and use opportunities within the community to interact and engage with them. Personal contacts between the police and members of the community will familiarise them to their police officers.

**What we’re doing already…**

Dyfed-Powys’ Dafydd Llywelyn has invested in increased CCTV, a new sustainable Policing Hub and Custody Suite and a Town Centre Police Constable role. These measures aim to make the public feel safe, increase opportunities to feed in and connect with the police force in the area, and to modernise the police force.

According to the NFU, the cost of rural crime to the Welsh economy increased by 41.4 per cent between 2017 and 2018, with the cost of rural crime being at its highest since 2013.

Wales is a mostly rural country and rural crime brings its own unique challenges; police may have to travel large distances to incidents and the isolated nature of some of the communities served can make citizens feel more vulnerable and concerned. The isolation of some rural communities can also make some forms of crime harder to spot. These include domestic violence and sexual offences as well as forms of organised crime such as human trafficking and modern slavery.

Rural-specific crime can consist of the theft of high value machinery or the loss of livestock through theft or dog attacks. These opportunist and acquisitive crimes present a significant threat to our farmers and small holders, which negatively impact on livelihoods.

Under the guidance of our Commissioners in North Wales and Dyfed-Powys, these police forces have a dedicated Rural Crime Team. We will increase the capacity of our rural crime teams to deal with the increased demand that they face.

According to the NFU, between 2017 and 2018 the cost of dog attacks on livestock rose by 67 per cent. However, the legislation with regards to livestock attacks is insufficient and restrictive. We will push for new legislation to:

* Make dog attacks an offence not only on agricultural land, but also to include private premises and all public places.
* Require all police forces to formally record livestock attacks, so there is a uniform picture of the true scale of the economic loss to the rural community and the impact on our food supply
* Make it a responsibility under law for a dog owner to report an attack.
* Give police officers the power to obtain DNA from a dog that is suspected of carrying out an attack on livestock.
* Give police the powers to ban a dog owner from future possession due to livestock attacks.

**Youth Justice**

Youth Justice should be devolved to Wales. Many factors linked to youth offending are related to already devolved services, such as education and training, social services and health. Meanwhile, youth offenders are dealt with through non-devolved services such as the police, Youth Offending Teams and youth courts. We believe that the administrative responsibility for the treatment and rehabilitation should be devolved to ensure that policy would then be better integrated.

Plaid Cymru believes:

* The criminal records system should be more sensitive to the transitory nature of much of childhood offending and prevent a situation where records can be disclosed for many years afterwards, which proves to be an obstacle to employment and encourages reoffending.
* Youth criminal records should be sealed upon request, which ensures the record still exists, and can be considered by judges if an individual breaks the law again in the future, but stops individuals needing to disclose convictions in job applications.

**Justice for Women**

Women in the prison system are more likely than men to serve shorter sentences. In 2016, 74 per cent of all women convicted were sentenced for less than 6 months. Nevertheless, short-term sentences often bring considerable chaos and disruption to the lives of women and their families. One consequence is that women who complete short-term sentences are more likely to re-offend than those sentenced to a court order. The children of women offenders are more likely to be forced to leave the family home than the children of male offenders.

Women are also overwhelmingly sent to prison for theft rather than violent offences. Often, they steal to feed their children or to support a partner’s drug habit. According to the Prison Reform Trust around half of women have been victims of crimes that are more serious than the ones for which they are themselves imprisoned.

We will use suspended sentences, through schemes such as Checkpoint Cymru, for those women who are charged with non-violent crimes, reducing the disruption caused to them and their family.

**Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault and Exploitation**

More than a quarter of women in Wales have suffered domestic abuse on more than one occasion, including physical, sexual and psychological violence.

At Westminster, we will continue to press for a Domestic Abusers Register. Currently, the police can disclose information regarding someone’s violent past to a partner if they ask to be informed, known as Clare’s Law. However, this does not go far enough. We have called for a new law to create a register of those convicted of domestic violence whereby anyone found guilty of domestic violence would be required to give the police their name, date of birth, home address and National Insurance number. This Bill would require offenders to tell police of any new relationships they start and place a responsibility on the police to proactively inform new partners of a repeated offender’s violent past. Persistent offenders and those sentenced to 30 months or more for domestic violence or coercive control would remain on the register indefinitely. Repeat offenders would also be required to report to the police on specific occasions, while officers would be allowed to make unannounced visits.

We will ensure that recent legislation and guidance on stalking, led by Plaid Cymru, is implemented properly across Wales so that those who suffer from stalking can feel comfortable in reporting their concerns, that these will be recorded, and action taken.

We will commission victim support services that offer emotional and practical help to victims of domestic abuse to help them cope and recover from their experience and to support them to achieve the best possible outcome through the criminal justice system.

An estimated one in five women have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16. Rape is still an under-reported crime and it is estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales that only one in six victims of rape report the incident to the police.

There were only three convictions for every 100 rape cases recorded by the police in England and Wales in the past year. Although the number of alleged rapes recorded by the police increased by 9 per cent, the number of charges fell by 38 per cent, prosecutions by 33 per cent and convictions by 27 per cent.

We will make the reporting of sexual abuse as straightforward as possible, ensuring that all incidents of Sexual Abuse are investigated and offer an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor as a supporter and advocate to each high-risk survivor.

We will ensure that Sexual Assault Referral Centres are properly funded with adequate training for the professionals that work there. We will also ensure that counselling services are available and well-funded as victims of rape can suffer from co-occurring issues relating to mental health and drug and alcohol abuse, especially due to self-medication.

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

To minimise the prevalence and damage caused by child sexual exploitation we will:

* Develop our proactive capability within the Paedophile and Online Investigation Team.
* Explore options for multi-agency initiatives to prevent and protect young people from exploitation and abuse, with a focus on early intervention initiatives.
* Improve the identification and targeting of perpetrators.
* Promote campaigns that tackle online child sexual abuse.

**Reforming the Criminal Justice System**

Although Wales does not have control over criminal justice - an important tool in reducing the number of prisoners – Police and Crime Commissioners can use the powers at their disposal to redirect people away from the criminal justice system towards pathways that will help with rehabilitation, reduce recidivism and tackle the underlying causes of crime. Plaid Cymru believe that prison should be the last option for non-violent crimes, rather than the default option. Our Police and Crime Commissioners will do what is in their power to bring Welsh prisoner levels closer to the Western European average.

Wales has the highest incarceration rate in western Europe, with one in every 667 people in the country behind bars. The prison-industrial complex in the UK has meant that four of the five prisons in Wales are overcrowded, leading to a deterioration of conditions for both staff and inmates.

One of the most effective ways of ensuring the rehabilitation of an inmate is to house them close to their local community and families. However, 39 per cent of Welsh prisoners are held in England and 30 per cent of prison spaces in Wales are for English inmates. We believe that inmates should be placed as close to their local communities as possible.

We do not believe that super-prisons are the most effective way of combating crime nor the best use of our resources. That is why we opposed the building of the Berwyn super-prison in Wrexham and the proposed super-prison in Port Talbot which was scrapped due to our opposition.

Entering the criminal justice system can either be a symptom of or cause longer-term issues. These include homelessness, mental health issues and substance misuse. Almost 25 per cent of Welsh inmates were homeless when they entered prison, over 90 per cent of prisoners have at least one of five psychiatric disorders, and there was a 475 per cent increase in drug finds in prisons over the last year.

Poverty and poor health are being criminalised. This needs to change by ensuring that support services are well-funded and by tackling the underlying issues that can lead to criminality.

According to research by the Wales Governance Centre, those from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately represented in prisons and the criminal justice system. In 2017, black people were 4.5 times overrepresented in prison, Asian prisoners were 1.7 times overrepresented and individuals from Mixed ethnic group were 2.4 times overrepresented.

Wales must be accountable and address the systemic and extreme racism present in our communities and institutions. This racism is interlinked with the UK’s history of slavery and colonialism, and consequent white supremacist systems. Plaid Cymru will hold a wide-ranging inquiry into the roots and remedies of structural racism and racial disadvantage in Wales.

Plaid Cymru will fully implement the recommendations of the Lammy Review to address the disparity of treatment and outcomes for black and minority ethnic people within the criminal justice system, together with the Angiolini Review on deaths and serious incidents in police custody.

Women in Wales are especially ill-served by the justice system, with all Welsh female prisoners being held in one of the twelve women’s prisons in England. This often results in the separation of young children from their mothers, makes family visits difficult. Moreover, there is a complete absence of Welsh language services for women prisoners.

The crimes committed by men and women can vary significantly. Women’s offending tends to be of a less serious nature, which means they tend to serve a shorter sentence. In 2016, 74 per cent of all women convicted were sentenced for less than 6 months.

Short-term sentences often bring considerable chaos and disruption to the lives of women and their families. Conversely, women who complete short-term sentences are more likely to re-offend than those sentenced to a court order.

We will use suspended sentences, through Checkpoint Cymru, for those women who are charged with non-violent crimes, dampening the disruption caused to them and their family. Rather than being ‘soft’ on crime, this is in line with best practice as it lowers reoffending rates in comparison to short-term custodial sentences.

**What we’re doing already…**

In North Wales a Plaid Cymru Police and Crime Commissioner set up an Economic Crime Unit and funded a dedicated officer to support fraud victims. History was also made when the Commissioner funded the appointment of the UK's first police support officer to help victims of modern slavery.

**Courts and Legal Aid**

Plaid Cymru has opposed the UK Government’s reductions to the legal aid budget which have stripped thousands of people of access to legal aid. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 effectively reversed the previous legal aid scheme, removing most civil legal matters from the scope of legal aid.

Plaid Cymru will reverse the harsh cuts so that people who are currently unable to access legal aid can exercise their right to justice. This should include the establishment of a simpler and more generous assessment scheme for civil legal aid, ensuring all benefit recipients automatically qualify for legal aid, and making the contributions to legal aid more affordable.

**Welsh Language Provision in the Criminal Justice System**

It is fundamental that everyone in Wales should be able to access the justice system in Welsh if they prefer. In Welsh-speaking parts of Wales, court closures make it impossible for residents to access legal services, obtain advice or legal counsel, or conduct their business in the language of their choice.

The UK government oppose bilingual juries on the basis that it would outweigh the principle of random selection, yet some Welsh-speakers are denied access to justice on this basis. We believe that in certain Welsh cases it is imperative that all members of a jury be bilingual in Welsh and English as this would allow the jury to be able to understand the evidence directly, rather than through a translator, thus ensuring that the content of the evidence is understood in its entirety. Plaid Cymru will continue to push for legislation to facilitate bilingual juries, to ensure a fair trial.

For prisons to be places of rehabilitation and reform, prisons must be environments that inmates feel comfortable in. An important example of this is the guaranteed provision of services in Welsh for Welsh-speakers. For many people in Wales, Welsh is the language in which they conduct their lives. Being sent to prison, for whatever transgressions, must still mean that people are able to access public services in Welsh. Denying an offender of such language rights only heightens feelings of isolation and segregation, which negatively impacts on mental health. Prisoners whose first or preferred language is Welsh should not be placed into a situation where there is little to no chance of day to day communication in their own language.

We believe that inmates should be held closer to their communities, which would likely result in the use of the Welsh language as reflected in the community to which they belong, and similar levels of staff speaking Welsh as in the community. We will press for the improvement of Welsh-language services in prisons, with a requirement to ensure that all prisons have an appropriate proportion of Welsh-speaking prison officers.