

Meet Sheila...
NEU and NEU Cymru
officer of the year.

History teaches us so much
Radio play about WWII deals
with immigration, then and now.

Covid-19 update
Summer funding, conference,
school openings and more.

educateinwales

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'Embed anti-racism in curriculum'

NEU Cymru has called on the Welsh Government to ensure the new curriculum reflects Wales' Black and global history and includes the achievements of Black Britons.

In a letter to Education Minister Kirsty Williams, the union also said that every teacher in Wales should receive anti-racism training and that steps should be taken to make the teaching profession "significantly more diverse".

Wales secretary David Evans wrote that the Government should ensure the wellbeing and safety of Black and vulnerable workers and their communities.

"Our members are deeply concerned about the injustices and racial disparities that have been highlighted by the [Covid-19] virus and by the horrific events of brutality against Black people in the United States," David wrote in his letter of 22 June.

"We believe that Wales has the opportunity with the Curriculum for Wales to promote an end to acts of race hate, that are not new, unique or disconnected."

The new curriculum is due to be introduced in September 2022 and David said there was an opportunity now to ensure that anti-racism education was embedded within it.

The union wants the Welsh Government to review teacher training so that every teacher receives anti-racism training, and to adopt a strategy making "the pipeline" of new entrants to the teaching profession significantly more diverse over the next four years.

Kirsty Williams has said she will "actively seek to redress" the under-representation of Black communities in the education workforce and the Welsh Government has promised to work with the inspectorate Estyn "to ensure that their review of Welsh history takes full account of black, Asian, minority ethnic history, identity and culture".

Read David's letter in full at neu.org.uk/press-releases/curriculum-and-anti-racism-letter

■ A petition is pressing the Welsh Government to introduce anti-racist teaching materials in schools to reduce hate crimes. Sign it at petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/200056



WELSH representatives of the Black Educators Organising Forum, Christine Dando (left), Daniel Wilson (right) and Roxanne Beckles, are setting up a private Facebook group for Black NEU members in Wales. For more details email Christine at christine.dando@neu.org.uk or Daniel at daniel.wilson@neu.org.uk



RACISM IN WALES?

EXPLORING PREJUDICE IN THE
WELSH EDUCATION SYSTEM
MAY 2020



SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

HUNDREDS of school days are being lost and increasing numbers of pupils are being excluded due to racism, according to research in Wales by an anti-racism charity.

More than 1,000 teachers and teaching assistants from Welsh schools completed an online survey organised by Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC). A Freedom of Information request by the charity also revealed a 19 per cent increase in the number of exclusions due to racism in the 2018/19 academic year compared to the previous year.

Download the report at theredcard.org/publications
■ SRtRC's annual Wear Red Day is on 16 October when people are encouraged to wear red and donate £1 towards anti-racism education. Go to theredcard.org/wear-red-day

Online success for WULF courses

NEU Cymru's Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) project has continued to have a significant impact on members during the Covid-19 crisis.

The demand for places on the project's online courses was so great that extra courses were organised to ensure as many people as possible had access to the training.

Online courses have included: Building the Google Classroom, and Online Tools for Critical Thinking (Nearpod), both led by Julian Ayres, a lecturer in education at Glyndwr University; Getting Started with the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience, led by education consultant Helen Bowen; and Let's Talk Maths, led by mathematics consultant Gaynor Murphy.

Learning dates for your diary

TRAINING FOR REPS

The union's training courses give new and existing school reps the tools and confidence to make a real difference to members' lives. If you're interested, email lisa.williams@neu.org.uk – and remember, reps are legally entitled to attend training. The NEU will support any rep who has difficulties getting time off work to attend.

TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

Courses are available through the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) project – visit bit.ly/3jgca5w

Due to the current health crisis, the WULF project will continue to provide online courses for our members. These courses have proved to be extremely popular and because of this, more will be organised over the coming months to meet the demand. Subjects have already included: Google Classroom and the Google Package; Digital Competency (different platforms that make teaching and learning more interactive and fun); and Literacy for the New Curriculum.

Check your email inbox for information on the latest training opportunities. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/neucymrutraining, follow us on Twitter at [@neucymrutrain](https://twitter.com/neucymrutrain) and visit neu.org.uk/learning-and-events

Two NEU awards for Sheila

THE day after Sheila Jones heard she had won the union's 2019/20 Wales officer of the year award, she received another letter telling her she had also won the union's national officer of the year award.

"The NEU Cymru award was a shock in itself," she said. "Then to win the national award, it's such an honour."

Sheila was nominated by her colleague Angela Sandles with whom she has been campaigning to improve the pay and conditions for supply teachers.

They were both nominated for this year's Annie Higdon award for services to women, and last year they received lifetime achievement awards for their campaigning work.

A former supply teacher, Sheila said she "got really stuck in" to the campaign in 2017 when the group – Fair Deal for Supply Teachers – lobbied Assembly members in Cardiff.

The campaign met with a degree of success last year when the Welsh Assembly introduced a new framework agreement for supply teaching, with a minimum daily rate of £127.72.

But the agreement is not mandatory and Sheila said they still hear of teachers paid as little as £95 a day – and so the campaign continues.

"It's precarious work and people have been struggling, particularly through the Covid crisis. We need to get rid of agencies, [the pay and conditions] are so patchy, it's wrong," said Sheila, who is also a rep in Caerphilly.

Acknowledging the support the campaign has received from Wales secretary David Evans and the NEU supply teacher network, she added: "I'm part of a team of campaigners and it has all been a team effort." Find out more about the campaign at facebook.com/FairDealForSupplyTeachers



Sheila Jones

PHOTO by Carmen Valino

Experienced teachers lose out in pay deal

NEU Cymru continues to argue for a seven per cent increase for all teachers after the Welsh Government announced its proposed pay award for 2020 in July.

David Evans, the union's Wales Secretary, said he welcomed some aspects of the award, such as an 8.48 per cent increase in the starting salary for new teachers to over £27,000 and an end to performance-related pay.

"These are some of the things submitted in our evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Board (IWPRB) as part of our proposals on teachers' pay back in April," he said. But he said the proposals indicated salaries would taper off as teachers progressed through the profession.

"More experienced teachers and leaders must see their immense hard work and efforts rewarded fairly, and this pay award does not do that," he said.

The IWPRB made seven main recommendations, all of which were accepted in principle by Education Minister Kirsty Williams. The consultation period ends later in September.

Read the IWPRB report at bit.ly/2EAgkFJ



A 3.5-metre model of the Arandora Star from her days as a luxury cruise ship has been carefully restored at the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool. Ship models conservator David Parsons is pictured putting the finishing touches to the model before it goes on display at the museum.

PHOTO by Gareth Jones

80 years on, Arandora is a play for today

A NEATH theatre company is producing a radio play for school audiences based on a tragic event in World War II in which dozens of Welsh Italians lost their lives.

When Italy entered the war to support Hitler in June 1940, Italian people living in Wales and other parts of the UK were branded enemy aliens and many were interned.

At the end of June 1940, former cruise ship the Arandora Star set sail with 53 Welsh Italians among the passengers on board, bound for internment camps in Newfoundland, Canada.

The ship was just 75 miles off the Irish coast when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat early on 2 July, with the loss of more than 800 lives, including most of the men from Wales.

Eight hours clinging to ship's wreckage

Now Theatr na nÓg is basing its latest production, entitled *The Arandora Star*, on the experiences of the Italian families who lived and worked in Wales during the war.

Geinor Styles, assistant director of the theatre company, has written the play with colleague Mali Tudno Jones, inspired by conversations with Paulette Pelosi from Swansea whose grandfather, Guisepppe, was rescued from the sea after clinging to wreckage for eight hours.



PHOTO by Phil Melia

Geinor says it is very much a play for today. "It is a really interesting story because it deals with immigration and how we relate to people who are different from us," she told Educate. "Italians in Wales, especially in the valleys, are really part of the fabric. The play is part of getting children to understand that Wales, especially south Wales, is made up of lots and lots of groups of different people, and to be aware of that."

She is certain children will understand the themes: "Children are really sophisticated and the questions they ask are just phenomenal. Their empathy for characters is amazing."

This will be the first time the theatre company has produced a radio play, as Geinor explained: "We've never done anything like this

before. On average we get 5,000 children at our productions but for now it's what we can do.

"We don't want to put any more pressure on teachers, it must be quite heartbreaking for them. They say how quiet it is [in schools], how subdued. Hopefully this will help the children get back to their old selves and feel safe and confident again."

Geinor is full of respect for the work teachers have been doing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. "It's phenomenal what they have managed to do."

Daily radio instalments

The play is due to be broadcast from mid-September and will be aired in daily instalments – "like an Archers episode every day" – in English and Welsh. It is directed by Daniel Lloyd and is suitable for year 5 upwards. There will be no charge to access the play, nor for Theatr na nÓg's app, which includes many resources and lesson plans. Visit theatr-nanog.co.uk to sign up for log-in details for the app, a link to the play and a donate button.

■ A memorial service was held at Cardiff Cathedral on 5 July to mark the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the Arandora Star. Excerpts, including the recitation of the names of the 53 Welsh Italians on board, are available at bit.ly/2ZoffPJ

A permanent memorial to those who lost their lives was unveiled at the cathedral on the 70th anniversary in 2010.

Here to help

AS the largest and fastest-growing education union, NEU Cymru can offer members an unrivalled service.

Our professional team is here to provide expertise to our network of workplace representatives and district and branch secretaries.

If you have a problem at work or want to know more about member services, contact:

- your workplace representative;
- your branch secretary;
- Adviceline;
- NEU Cymru office.

NEU Cymru

TySinnott, 18 Neptune Court,
Vanguard Way, Cardiff CF24 5PJ

Tel: 029 2049 1818

Email: cymru.wales@neu.org.uk

Wales secretary: David Evans

Senior Wales officers: Gareth Lloyd,
Debbie Scott

Senior Wales policy officer:
Mary van den Heuvel

North Wales organiser: Cai Jones

South Wales Organiser:
Robert Goddard

Wales solicitor: Angharad Booker

Executive members: Neil Foden,
Máiréad Canavan, Lesley Tipping

Head office

National Education Union, Hamilton
House, Mabledon Place, London
WC1H 9BD

Tel: 020 7388 6191

Website: neu.org.uk

President: Robin Bevan

Joint general secretaries:
Mary Bousted &
Kevin Courtney

Translation by
Rhys Iorwerth Cyf
rhysiorwerth@
hotmail.com



Welsh Government first to fund free summer meals

THE Welsh Government was the first UK nation to commit to continuing free school meals for eligible children throughout the summer holidays.

An extra £2.6 million in funding was also made available to support children during the summer break who had most missed out on school activities because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Health advice prompts Conference Cymru rethink

CONFERENCE Cymru, due to have been held in Llandudno on 7-8 November, has been cancelled amid concerns about possible future spikes of Covid-19.



A meeting between NEU Cymru officers and all district/branch secretaries in July made the unanimous decision after hearing the views of Wales' Chief Scientific Adviser for Health, Dr Rob Orford (pictured above).

He believes that there are likely to be spikes of Covid-19 in the autumn term which could lead to localised lockdowns. He also said that although the Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect system was effective, it had not produced enough results at the time of the meeting.

Dr Orford said the virus likes the cold and indoor areas and NEU officers were concerned that the proposed venue for the conference would not allow any opportunity for social distancing.

NEU Cymru is now looking at possible alternative arrangements for the conference to be held and districts/branches will be advised in due course.

See you at Eisteddfod 2021

NEU Cymru is looking forward to seeing many old and new friends at next year's Urdd National Eisteddfod.



The 2020 festival, due to have been held during the Whitsun half-term

week, was cancelled because of the coronavirus crisis, but the union will have a stand at the week-long event in Denbighshire next year.

We will be joined on the stand by Show Racism the Red Card, who will have wristbands, stickers and posters of Welsh sports teams to give away.

NEU Cymru policy officer Stuart Williams said: "With the unfortunate cancellation of this year's festival due to the Covid-19 crisis, we sincerely hope that we will be in a position where everyone can enjoy everything that the Urdd National Eisteddfod has to offer and that, medical and scientific advice allowing, as many people as possible are able to support this great event."

■ Visit urdd.cymru/en/eisteddfod/2021/

Face coverings advice

THE Welsh Government's discretionary approach on the wearing of face coverings in schools and colleges was welcomed by NEU Cymru.

But the union is pressing ministers to look at the World Health Organization advice for people aged 60 and over who work with children to wear medical grade masks.

The Government is advising, but not mandating, everyone over the age of 11 to wear face masks in schools and on school transport where two-metre physical distancing is not possible.

NEU Wales Secretary David Evans said: "As everyone goes back to school and college it is important we have all measures in place to make it as safe as possible for staff and students alike."

■ The Welsh Government is providing £29 million extra funding to help provide increased support for years 11 and above and for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.

■ NEU Cymru was disappointed when the union was blamed for the decision by some local authorities not to open school for an additional week at the end of the summer term.

This was made by local authorities based on the current information and their local circumstances. The union's preference was to wait for a September reopening to give the Government's Test, Trace, Protect system time to bed in.