

22 May 2012



William Powell AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
CAERDYDD

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Dear Mr Powell

Petition: Emergency Life Support (ELS) Skills for Wales' schoolchildren

On behalf of British Heart Foundation (BHF) Cymru I would like to present you with the following petition as Chair of the petition Committee of the National Assembly for Wales:

“We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to make ELS skills training, including vital cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) a compulsory part of the curriculum at secondary schools in Wales, forming part of the core knowledge and understanding that children acquire at school. This would create a new generation of lifesavers across Wales.”

I understand that this petition is admissible for consideration by the Petitions Committee under Standing Orders.

Part of the BHF Cymru's manifesto for the Welsh Elections in May was a call for Emergency Life Support (ELS) skills to be taught in all schools in Wales as part of the National Curriculum. This forms part of a UK wide campaign by the organisation which includes an [online petition](#) for which there has been over 100,000 signatures of support, with over 4,000 signed in Wales.

ELS is the set of actions needed to keep someone alive until professional help arrives. ELS can be performed without any special medical knowledge. It includes performing CPR, putting an unconscious person in the recovery position, dealing with choking, serious bleeding and helping someone that may be having a heart attack. Children are often present at emergencies and we believe they are well-placed to help save lives. BHF research has also shown that skill retention among those children taught ELS is good and when surveyed, 88% of parents in Wales believed that their children should be taught ELS in school.

A number of organisations already successfully provide training and support for teachers so that they can deliver these skills and the BHF operates a successful Heartstart Schools Programme, teaching children ELS. Currently, around 200 schools in Wales are teaching ELS through Heartstart – around a quarter of these are secondary schools. ELS training fits flexibly into the curriculum and in the schools

.../...



already teaching ELS teachers have incorporated it into subjects including Personal and Social Education (PSE), Physical Education, and Science and takes as little as 2 hours to teach.

ELS is currently a non-mandatory component of PSE, with many children therefore not receiving this training at schools that have chosen not to include it in their curricula. BHF Cymru would therefore like to see it made a compulsory part of all children's secondary education to create a new generation of lifesavers across Wales. In recent discussions with the Welsh Government, they have made their position clear in that the delivery of the curriculum is delegated to schools and decisions over content lie with head teachers and their governing bodies. The Welsh Government have also indicated that there are no plans to make changes to the current PSE framework yet our survey¹ of teachers across the UK found overwhelming support for ELS to be taught in schools.

We would therefore like to work with the Petitions Committee and the National Assembly in considering this as part of the wider public health agenda and we're willing to provide further evidence as to how the Heartstart School Programme in particular is delivering real benefits in terms of providing essential life skills to our young people and significantly contributing to the health and wellbeing agenda.

I look forward to hearing back from you at your earliest convenience

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Delyth Lloyd".

Delyth Lloyd
Public Affairs Manager
British Heart Foundation (BHF) Cymru



ⁱ Research was carried out online by OnePoll in February 2011. Total sample size was 2,072 parents, 1,000 children aged 11-15 years old, and 500 teachers across the UK.

Beating Heart Disease Together
Heart Information Line • Llinell Gwybodaeth y Galon **0300 330 3311**
Cost rhif lleol / a local rate number