

**This response was submitted to the Equality and Social justice Committee on the inquiry into Social Cohesion**

**SC 04**

**Ymateb gan: Llanelli Unites**

**Response from: Llanelli Unites**

---

1. Llanelli Unites is a voluntary group which aims to celebrate diversity and to promote community cohesion. The group has members from different political parties, local churches, trades unions and community groups.
2. Llanelli Unites was formed in the aftermath of the dispute around housing asylum seekers at Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli. Specifically, as a response to the activities of the Far Right and the rise in extremism, hate and racism which is still evident in Llanelli.
3. We have previously fed into the “lessons learned” report from the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and will not repeat points around the lack of communication and consultation from the Home Office.
4. In terms of promoting community cohesion in the near future we would offer the following observations:
  - 4.1. There is a lack of clarity around responsibility for community cohesion. It is too easy for public bodies to avoid the issue and to pass responsibility to other organisations.
  - 4.2. There is a lack of communication and partnership working both between public bodies such as county and community councils and with Police and Crime Commissioners.
  - 4.3. There is a very inconsistent approach to working with community groups and to engaging with community members. There should be a requirement on every local community cohesion partnership to work with community groups and representatives from minority groups.
  - 4.4. Resources for promoting community cohesion need to be used more effectively. There needs to be a locally agreed strategy to guide spending and a more targeted approach.
  - 4.5. There needs to be a more direct response to the threat from Far Right groups and individuals.
  - 4.6. Welsh Government needs to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with local communities around issues such as Nation of Sanctuary and the Anti Racist Action Plan.
5. There is a specific need to use research to understand “what works” in combatting hate and division in communities. There is a need to listen to communities who have differing views on issues around immigration, asylum, etc and to bring people together to discuss such issues and to challenge misinformation. This is likely to need significant resource and need a very skilled approach.