

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i Gydlyniant Cymdeithasol](#)

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) on the [inquiry into Social Cohesion](#)

SC 23

Ymateb gan: Cydlynnydd Cydlyniant Cymunedol Canolbarth a De-orllewin Cymru, Cyngor Sir Gaerfyrddin

Response from: Mid and South West Wales Community Cohesion Coordinator, Carmarthen Council

Key Issues Impacting Social Cohesion in Mid and South West Wales

- **Rural Isolation & Service Accessibility**
Many communities face challenges in accessing services, which can lead to social exclusion, particularly for ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ communities, asylum seekers, and older people.
- **Community Tensions & Misinformation**
The rise of misinformation, particularly online, has contributed to negative narratives around migration LGBTQ+ issues, increasing community tensions.
- **Hate Crime & Discrimination**
Reports of hate crime remain a concern, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, religious minorities, and asylum seekers. The team works closely with police and third-sector partners to raise awareness of how to report.
- **Housing & Accommodation for Asylum Seekers:** The dispersal of asylum seekers to rural areas, where infrastructure and support networks are limited, presents integration challenges.

Best Practices & Interventions Supporting Social Cohesion

- **Tension Monitoring**
Weekly local multi agency monitoring of tensions on a local authority level.
- **Online Challenges and Awareness**
The team actively works on developing critical thinking skills through awareness raising of online hate and particularly around LGBTQ+ issues, asylum seekers and refugees, through public engagement, training and social media.
- **Hate Crime Awareness & Reporting**
Collaboration with police, Local Authorities, schools, and community groups has helped increase awareness and reporting of hate crimes.
- **Community Engagement Events**
Initiatives which bring diverse communities together to foster understanding (via Small Grant funding).
- **Training**

facilitating training for a variety of audiences. Eg Cohesion in Our Communities, providing information about successful projects; Power of Language – how the words we use can be harmful

- Awareness of key campaigns and initiatives
Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBT History Month, Refugee Week, Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month, Hate Crime Awareness Week etc.
- Policy
Embedding Community Cohesion within Policy and practice across Local Authorities

Welsh Government Support & Areas for Improvement

- Funding & Sustainability
The community cohesion programme can be vulnerable to short term funding (until 2023, funding was annual, the current round of funds has been for 3 years). Any less than this makes it difficult to maintain long-term impact. Greater funding stability is needed.
- Support for Rural Areas
Most funding and resources/services tend to focus on urban areas, whereas rural communities need tailored support to address unique challenges.
- Stronger UK Government Collaboration
Issues such as online hate, immigration policy, and policing fall under UK Government powers. More collaboration is needed to address these challenges at a national level.
- Capacity Building for Community Groups
Many grassroots organisations lack resources to apply for funding or expand their work. Training and simplified funding processes could help.