

**P-04-554 An official Welsh Government policy that prohibits non transparent training organisations from working within public bodies – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 22.09.14**

Annwyl Kayleigh,

Please accept this as my reply to Mr William Powell and the petition panel's request for further information for the petition titled

"An official Welsh Government policy that prohibits non transparent training organisations from working within public bodies"

Text below:

Dear Mr Powell and the petition panel,

Further to the Sovereign Wales petition titled "An official Welsh Government policy that prohibits non transparent training organisations from working within public bodies", as requested I'm sending you further information which will hopefully be of use.

According to FOI requests and the Welsh Government's disclosure log, £115,346.50 has been spent on training courses for staff by the Common Purpose training organisation alone.

There are other organisations that are also relevant such as Eleisha training for which spending figures haven't yet been made available. By definition of courses I mean career and personal development, leadership or advancement and any that are not directly related to the person's employment. I apologise for including a number of links but I feel it is important to include all of them as they speak for themselves on this issue.

Below can be seen a link to a Welsh Government answer to an FOI regarding the above figures:

<http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/dl2013/aprjun/gov1/dlgov496/?lang=en>

The full original disclosure log 2086 for this FOI above can be seen as archived by the Welsh Government here:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120406044341/http://wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/disclosurelogs/premay10disclosures/disclosures2000-2099/disclog2086/?lang=en>

In this Welsh Government FOI response it is stated that a company called Eleisha training is the in house training of the Welsh Government although Eleisha is a private limited company who's vision statement reads "Eliesha is a Europe-wide provider of bespoke training and consultancy services" (<http://www.eliesha.com/>)

<http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/dr2012/julsep/gov1/dlgov354/?lang=en>

More detailed responses by from the Welsh Government disclosure log regarding FOI on training courses can be seen here (Disclosure log 2116):

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20140618053619/http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/premay10disclosures/dl2100-2199/disclog2116/?skip=1&lang=en>

In this below response (Disclosure log 2318) the Welsh Government refuses a request from a member of the public asking for the names of elected Welsh Assembly members, Welsh Government members or their employees who have attended Common Purpose courses, stating in their response that "our view is that the disclosure of the personal data requested would be unfair"

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20140618043226/http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/premay10disclosures/dl2300/disclog2318/?skip=1&lang=en> This in itself raises very serious questions about lack of transparency and the

use of the public's money.

Two more refusals to divulge similar information on Welsh Government training courses which are in the public interest can be seen below:

Gov 171

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140404005258/http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/dr2011/gov/5874675/?lang=en>

Gov268

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140404005258/http://wales.gov.uk/about/foi/responses/dr2012/janmar/gov/5872146/?lang=en>

In conclusion, the Welsh Government states that it follows the principles of openness and transparency in government. However that certainly isn't the case in this instance. I hope that you will agree that this is of significant public and democratic interest. The public are being denied their rights to know how exactly their money is being spent, what these courses entail and which of our political representatives and public employees have attended and are attending these courses. As it stands this situation is the opposite of transparency.

Training for general technical and IT skills is understandable but these courses go beyond that remit. As stated above I am of the strong view that it's therefore crucial that any training provided is utterly transparent and that we the public know exactly what these training courses entail and how our public servants use our public money to these ends.

It must also be asked why our politicians and staff need to be trained for 'personal development and leadership' by anyone at all, never mind non democratically accountable sources. Our political representatives and civil service should not need to be 'trained' or influenced in any way in these unnecessary areas given that they are accountable to us the people and our politicians are voted in based on their individual characters and beliefs

I hope this response will help to demonstrate my view that the suggestions made in the petition are not only necessary but very important to public trust and the accountability of governance in Wales.

Diolch yn fawr ,

Gruffydd Meredith