



Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) Response to the All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

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Are you responding as an individual or are you representing the views of an organisation? On behalf of an organisation

If you have ticked 'On behalf of an organisation' or 'For a group of organisations', please specify: ATL Cymru (Association of Teachers and Lecturers)

At the end of the consultation period we may publish a summary of the responses we have received or the responses in their entirety. This may include the identity of those who are responded. Please indicate your preference below.

I am happy for my response and my identity to be published

Would you like an acknowledgement that your response has been received?*

Yes via e mail

Would you like to receive any summary of responses that we produce? *

Yes via e mail

Would you like us to tell you how the comments we receive affect what happens next?

Yes via e mail

What, from your organisation's perspective, do you understand by the term community cohesion? :

ATL Cymru believes that a socially cohesive society is one that embodies the value of equality. We believe that it is imperative that there is a clear and shared understanding of what defines a cohesive community.

Would you support the use of the UK definition and key principles, as set out in the strategy document? :

ATL Cymru would support the use of the UK definition and key principles as set out in the strategy. We agree that a key contributor to community cohesion is integration, which is essential to enable new and old residents to live harmoniously together in any community.

ATL Cymru welcomes the proposals to set out a framework for local community cohesion strategies within Wales. We are pleased to note that the Welsh Assembly Government acknowledges that community cohesion will vary at local level.

Do you support the development of an All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy and what benefits do you think it could bring?

ATL Cymru supports the development of an all Wales community cohesion strategy. We believe such a strategy will build stronger, more integrated communities. Community Cohesion is a key stepping stone towards achieving a fair and just environment where equality is at the core.

Do you agree with the proposed aims and objectives of the strategy? :

ATL Cymru agrees with the proposed aims and objectives of the strategy and agrees that they cannot be delivered without engaging with key stakeholders, including trade unions.

Do you agree that the proposed action plan for local authorities, given how much of their activities impact upon community cohesion, is a useful development tool? :

ATL Cymru agrees that the proposed action plan for LA's is a useful development tool and will aid the development of integrated, cross cutting community cohesion policies by local authorities.

In this consultation, we have asked a number of definite questions. If there is anything else related to this consultation that you would like to comment on?

ATL Cymru agrees that learning plays a crucial role in enhancing and developing community cohesion. ATL Cymru supports the development of community schools and many members report about the beneficial impact such establishments have on their local community. Community schools are particularly crucial to the development and sustainability of community cohesion in deprived areas where they often are the only establishments locally that offer residents opportunities for lifelong learning, socialising, etc.

ATL Cymru firmly believes that it is wrong to differentiate and segregate children on grounds such as religion, amongst others. This practice is socially divisive in communities and contrary to the key principles set out in the community cohesion strategy. ATL Cymru believes that we need schools that embrace the diversity of the individuals within our community, not a diversity of institutions dividing pupils and staff on particular grounds, such as religion. Care must be taken that discrimination and segregation are not practised covertly under the guise of laudable policy objectives or principles such as parental choice.

Faith schools receive grants (of up to 90% of the total cost) towards capital costs of the buildings and 100% of running costs (including teachers' salaries) from the State. Yet voluntary-aided faith schools are allowed to impose faith restrictions on employment, admissions, curriculum content and on school worship. ATL Cymru believes that faith schools should be more accountable if they continue to receive this level of State funding. State funding should be earned through evidence of socially just educational practices and a widening of service to the whole community. It is, after all, the community that pays such a large proportion of their costs.