

Beth Winter MP

By email to: Mark Drakeford

30th May 2021

Annwyl Mark,

Re: Political Priorities for Welsh Labour in New Senedd Term – Universal Basic Income/ Parthed: Blaenoriaethau Gwleidyddol i Lafur Cymru yn Nhymor Newydd y Senedd – Incwm Sylfaenol Cyffredinol

Llongyfarchiadau enfawr ar ganlyniad rhagorol yr etholiad. Mae'n wir yn dyst i'ch arweinyddiaeth ofalus a chryf wedi'i ategu gan werthoedd sosialaidd. Yn anffodus rhaid i mi droi at Saesneg am weddill y llythyr.

As you are probably aware, since being elected I have been a strong advocate and campaigner for UBI and for pilots to take place and I am Co-Chair of the Cross-Party Parliamentary and Local Government Working Group on UBI. I very much welcome your announcement to establish a UBI pilot here in Wales and tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament congratulating and thanking Welsh Government and supportive Senedd Members for this commitment and called on UK Government to cooperate and provide support for this trial.

With specific regards to the type of pilot I think it is essential that this covers different cohorts of people, including the employed, the unemployed and children, and that it takes place within a community, preferably involving all members of an identifiable locality. Having come from academic backgrounds we both understand the necessity for studies to be rigorous, reliable and valid and I believe that it is only by taking the approach I propose that an assessment of universality of UBI can be achieved and its effectiveness properly measured.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to suggest that the UBI pilot takes place in my constituency of Cynon Valley. I believe that my constituency has the perfect mix of demographics and communities for a pilot but would also benefit massively from such an initiative. Sadly, we have very high levels of poverty and deprivation, with one ward – Penrhiwceiber – having one of the highest child poverty rates in the UK at 45%. We also have high levels of unemployment and welfare benefit claimants. At the same time we do have pockets and communities of relative affluence.

You will also be too well aware that Rhondda Cynon Taff, the Local Authority within which my constituency of Cynon Valley is located, suffered the third highest Covid death rate in the UK. There is also a strong commitment in our constituency to the idea of UBI – the Constituency Labour Party passed a motion in support of UBI earlier this year as did the Local Authority. The Council Leader, Cllr Andrew Morgan, is also a strong supporter of UBI. For all these reasons I think that my constituency would be the ideal place to trial UBI.

I am currently in discussion with Professor Guy Standing (advisor to former Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell on UBI & author of Basic Income: And How We Can Make it Happen). He is keen to support the Wales pilot and we would both very

much welcome meeting with you and other Welsh Government Ministers involved to discuss it and potential models in further detail. If this is something that you would be agreeable to please send me some suggested meeting dates and I will liaise with Professor Standing.

Edrych ymlaen at eich ymateb.

Yr Eiddoch

Dr. Beth Winter MP

Cynon Valley

c.c. Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice