



Reform suffers self-inflicted Senedd defeat over childcare

Description

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Dan Thomas, leader of Reform in Wales

Remarkable things have been occurring in the Senedd as highlighted by [independent journalist Will Hayward](#), 11 Welsh Reform ministers apparently voted to back an amendment criticising their own party.

The original motion under debate was [proposed by Dan Thomas](#) the leader of Reform's Senedd branch. It called on the Welsh government:

to publish the full costings and timetable for the introduction of their childcare offer within their first 100 days in government.

Plaid Cymru [claim that](#), once implemented, their plan will see every child aged 9 months to 4 years receive 20 hours of fully funded childcare per week, for 48 weeks a year. The party estimates that this will equate to around £30,000 in care costs per child over their first 4 years.

A little amendment?

Now, we should note here that Plaid have stated that their childcare proposal is already fully costed. However, they haven't shown any inclination to dance to Reform's tune by publishing it.

Opening the debate, [Thomas made a claim](#) that would come back to bite him fairly sharpish:

I know all parties want the best for children and families, and we may have different ideas about how to achieve that, but the substantive motion that we will be voting on is this

Government's full costings and timetable.

I want to reiterate that Reform supports childcare and we support the current childcare offer, which is already baked into the Government's budget, as introduced by the then Labour Government.

However, Plaid's Heledd Fychan and Gwyn Williams had another plan. Their amendment proposed that Reform's entire motion be deleted and replaced with three points:

1. Notes that Reform UK had no commitments on childcare in its Welsh manifesto.
2. Further notes the clear evidence that improving access to childcare would reduce child poverty in Wales, and that access to universal funded childcare would support parents to return to work or to increase their working hours.
3. Recognises the Welsh Government's commitment to provide an update on the initial costings and phasing for the expansion of universal childcare before the summer recess, in line with the commitments outlined in the Party's plan.

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Reform has no plans around childcare

Hayward had a more succinct description here, [calling the situation](#)

a vote to say that Reform has no plans around childcare.

Unsurprisingly, [the amendment to embarrass Reform](#) won in short order. 50 Senedd members voted in favour, compared to 41 against.

What was more surprising, however, was that 11 of those 50 votes in favour *came from Reform ministers*. Given that the far-right party only has 34 members in the entire Senedd, that's just shy of a third that voted against their own party. What's more, without their support, the amendment wouldn't have passed.

Hayward mused that this [begs the question](#) "Why did they do this?"

You could argue that maybe they're making a bold statement about what they perceive to be a lack of support from their party to parents in Wales when it comes to childcare. Or it could be that they didn't really understand how to vote or what they were voting on.

Obviously the *Canary's* money is on Reform's Senedd members being utterly clueless. Just look at the party's extraordinary incompetence on everything from [finance](#) to [national security](#) (to [finance again](#)) to [candidate vetting](#) (and to [finance again](#) one more time). Hardly screams "safe pair of hands", does it?

An attack on affordable childcare

However, whilst we always enjoy pointing and laughing at Reform cocking up, it's worth remembering that this party – when it does get itself together enough to vote – is an active danger to us all. Fortunately, the rest of the Senedd weren't about to forget that fact.

Plaid's Sarah Rees [reiterated that Reform had](#) not a single proposal on childcare. However, she also pointed out that even the party's tenuously related policies would spell doom for many families:

Reform UK's proposed tax breaks would do nothing to support parents who've already been forced out of the workforce because their childcare bills outweigh their earnings. [!]

We've also heard Reform representatives, including Dan Thomas, speak to the BBC about improving maternity and paternity rights. Yet this sits in direct contradiction to Reform UK's own policy of supporting the Equality Act 2010.

However, it was Plaid's Keira Marshall – not a single mother – who really called out Reform's argument for what it is:

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In Cardiff, childcare can cost around £85 a day. That's what I've been quoted. That could be around £1,700 some months. No tax cut will solve that. At that price, it would make more sense for my partner to stop working. And unfortunately for the opposition, that sits directly at odds with the rhetoric we've heard from their own candidates about women nurturing and men providing. What we've heard today is not really a debate about affordability. It's a debate about whether Reform believe that childcare should exist in a way that allows both parents to work. And on that question, the public is already hearing their answer loud and clear.

Earlier this week, the *Canary* [reported on the fact](#) that Reform leader Nigel Farage has taken over £80,000 from the US anti-abortion lobby. Likewise, four Reform MPs [voted against](#) the decriminalisation of abortion.

Of course, immigrant-bashing is very much front and center in Reform's policies. But make no mistake – this party is an enemy of women's rights, and those of anyone they perceive as a woman. Whether it's fighting to make abortion less accessible or attacking affordable childcare, Reform is a poison for the very ideal of equality itself.

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By [Alex/Rose Cocker](#)

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