



Senior Welsh Reform politician â??infantilisesâ?? entire Welsh nation

Description

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Reform James Evans

Award-winning Welsh journalist and author Will Hayward has criticised a senior Welsh Reform politician over [his comments](#) that â??infantiliseâ?? the proud people he claims to represent.

[The Reformerâ??s statement](#) came at the Hay literary festival in Hay-on-Wye in Wales. Hayward indicated the Member of the Senedd (MS) in his post as James Evans. Heâ??s the Shadow Minister for Health, Prevention and Sport in Reformâ??s Welsh cabinet.

Since Mayâ??s [Senedd elections](#) James Evans MS has occupied that position within Welsh Reform. The comments were made in the context of significant [ongoing debates](#) around devolving the Crown Estate.

[The MS stated](#) that Wales shouldnâ??t have more devolved powers because:

I donâ??t think it should devolve for the simple reason being: if you devolve it youâ??ve got to then set up an office to run it. And weâ??re not very good in Wales at being efficient in running thingsâ?!

The crowd, presumably with a large Welsh contingent [groaned in unison](#) at these ignorant comments. Thereâ??s at least one audible exclamation of â??come on,â?? and certainly not a positive one.

Reform are the official opposition since Labour collapsed in Wales in [Mayâ??s historic Senedd elections](#) which delivered pro-independence party [Plaid Cymru to power](#) for the first time. Itâ??s hardly very patriotic for a Welsh Reform politician to belittle his people in such a demeaning manner.

[Reform's three-page plea to Wales doesn't mention Wales once](#)

Hayward hits back at Reform

Will Hayward makes it clear that, while he [favours devolution](#) of Wales land away from the English crown to its people, being against evolution is not inherently anti-Welsh. Evans' comments, however, do seem to be.

Responding to the Reform shadow minister's comments, Hayward wrote online:

the argument that "we are not very good in Wales at being efficient" is one of the most infantile descriptions of a nation I have ever heard, especially coming from a man/party who claimed they wanted to lead that nation. The idea that Wales and the Welsh are uniquely incapable of running a country is a depressing illustration of a level of self-hate and lack of confidence that we need to shed.

It's a narrative that holds us back more than anything.

In Hayward's view, this mindset makes a mockery of the idea that Welsh Reform are serious about winning power in the Celtic nation. It gives credence to the idea that Welsh Reform's political agenda in Wales is only really ever about laundering consent for Reform in Westminster, and not about the Welsh people.

It's a retrograde, patronising state of mind, which we should always push back on when it comes from outside of Wales. But it's particularly damaging when it comes from politicians who claim that they want to lead Wales.

Reform are deeply hostile to treating Wales as a thing in and of itself. They're really hostile to the idea of Wales having devolution, of having its own parliament. If you thought you could lead Welsh government, why would you not want that government to be equipped?

As Hayward points out in [another video](#), Reform appear to have abandoned some major demographic groups. They need to win these around if they were serious about winning meaningfully in Wales:

- Women, who make up 51% of voters, yet lag ten percent behind Welsh male support for Reform;
- Young people, who overwhelmingly oppose Reform at both the Welsh and the UK level; and
- People who feel "more Welsh than British," which is Wales's largest single identity group across all other demographic dividers (ethnic background, age, gender, etc.).

To that list I'd add Wales's Black and Brown people, since multiple Reform figures have [shared vile racist posts](#)

[Wales moves to decolonise its museums, and GB News is losing it](#)

Time to devolve the Crown Estate?

The Crown Estate is the land owned by the King in Wales, and all moneys earned by it go to the Treasury in London. It's not like Scotland's estates, where money earned from royal estates remains in Holyrood.

Constitutional law work Gareth Evans explains the [significance of the Crown Estate](#)

The Crown Estate holds a diverse portfolio of assets in Wales which includes 65 per cent of the foreshore, over 50,000 acres of land, and the majority of the seabed out to 12 nautical miles. It also holds general rights over the seabed and subsoil out to 200 nautical miles, including natural resources and the licensing of offshore energy projects, but excluding fossil fuels.

The economic importance of these assets is reflected in the recent changes in the stated value of the Crown Estate's assets in Wales, which rose from £95 million in 2020 to £853 million in 2023.

So this sudden uptick in value has clearly made the Crown Estate a hot topic. But the issue of the Crown Estate has gained [particular significance](#) since Plaid Cymru [took power](#) in Wales.

In 2025 a Private Members' bill was introduced by Lord Wigley, Plaid's former leader. But it did not pass, and the UK government remains opposed to devolving the money-maker. Because of course it does.

However, in 2024, the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales [recommended that the Crown Estate](#) should:

become the responsibility of the devolved government of Wales, as it is in Scotland.

Advocates like Hayward argue that if it's not devolved, Wales might forgo opportunities to shape and capture value from its own natural resources. In Scotland, Holyrood's management of their devolved Crown Estate estimate that [over £90b investments](#) into offshore wind energy could be made within 10-15 years.

Ultimately, like all of Wales, the Estate was only brought under English rule by [military conquest](#) centuries ago. It remains, like some say of all Cymru, colonised by England's crown.

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By [Cameron Baillie](#)

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