

**FM Interview Briefing****Cardiff University's Gair Rhydd – Wed 24 January 2024**

<b>Date and time</b>	<b>11:00 – Pre-meet with Redacted – Section 40</b> <b>11:15 – 11:45 – Interview</b>
<b>Location</b>	Cabinet Room, Ty Hywel (in-person)
<b>Interviewer</b>	Redacted – Section 40
<b>Length</b>	Up to 30 mins
<b>Format</b>	For print
<b>Press officer</b>	Redacted – Section 40
<b>Brief summary</b>	We advised you accept this interview, as part of Redacted – Section 40 interviews with Welsh political leaders. Redacted – Section 40 interviewed Redacted – Section 40 last year.
<b>Background</b>	Redacted – Section 40 is in his second year at Cardiff University, studying History.  Redacted – Section 40 is the political editor of Gair Rhydd, Cardiff University's student-led newspaper.
<b>Line of questioning</b>	Redacted – Section 40 has provided his questions in advance – see below.
<b>Briefing</b>	1. Questions submitted by Redacted – Section 40 2. Cardiff University students protest during a talk at the Student University Politics Society by Natasha Asghar MS 3. Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act (see Question 5)

## **1. Questions – provided by Thomas**

1. How did your time at university shape your politics?
2. How do you feel Cardiff has changed since you first moved here in 1979?
3. What were your experiences of local politics during the Thatcher years?
4. What were the key factors in Wales voting for devolution?
5. Are you concerned about clampdowns on the academic freedoms of universities? (focus on Higher Education Act) **Briefing below**
6. What do you feel are the greatest challenges facing the NHS?
7. How would you describe the relationship between devolved administrations and the Westminster government during the pandemic?
8. What do you feel needs to be done to increase turnouts in Senedd elections?
9. Are you concerned about the Conservative Party's growing calls to leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)?
10. What alternatives to austerity would you like to have seen implemented in 2010?
11. Are there any financial regulations you feel are needed to avoid a repeat of 2008?

## **2. Cardiff University students protest during a talk at the Student University Politics Society by Natasha Asghar MS**

*NB - Thomas hasn't said he'd ask about this, but worth reading as fits in with the freedom of speech in higher education theme.*

**Redacted – not in scope for relating to misinformation, public messaging strategy, or reputational risk**

**Lines to take**

- While freedom of speech and the right to protest is important, I do not condone in any way language or behaviour that may be considered threatening or discriminatory. In Wales, we have and embrace values of respect and inclusion which must be upheld.
- I understand Cardiff University is taking action to review its security measures in light of the event. The University Senior Leadership Team, has also reminded students of their responsibilities, particularly around tolerance, respect and inclusion.
- Universities have processes in place to protect free speech and the discussion of ideas but also to protect staff, students and visitors from

harassment. They are responsible for what happens on their campuses and we understand Cardiff is taking appropriate action.

### **3. Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act**

See Q5. *“Are you concerned about clampdowns on the academic freedoms of universities?” (focus on Higher Education Act)*

#### **Background - Higher Education Act 2023**

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#### **Lines to take**

- There are no problems with freedom of speech or academic freedom in Welsh universities that require this kind of additional legislative protection beyond what is already on the statute book.
- The Bill is an ideological UK Government response to perceived problems in English universities.

**Related news articles**

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