

LEANNE WOOD, PLAID CYMRU

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AM: Leanne Wood, according to a recent poll six percent of people in Wales back independence. Why has Wales – at the moment the SNP is roaring ahead – turned its back on the independence idea?

LW: Bore da. Good morning from Cardiff. This election that we face in just four days time is going to be a referendum on the health service in Wales.

AM: I did as a question, if I may. I mean I did ask you why independence wasn't - people in Wales seem to be turning their backs on independence.

LW: Well, I don't accept that they are turning their backs on independence -

AM: 6 percent.

LW: it's not a debate that's going on at the moment here in Wales. There is a great need to improve the powers that we have and our financial settlement. But crucially, the thing that people are talking about the most, is the health service, the education system and our economy, and that's why the election in four days time is going to be a referendum on the health service. And from the conversations that I've been having with people I can feel change is coming to Wales and it's about time as well, because we've had 17 years of one party running the government in Wales and it's now time for a change.

AM: Now we all know on this programme to treat opinion polls with a handful of salt, nonetheless, looking at the polling it suggests that perhaps Labour are going to lose that overall majority and that Plaid might be in a position to go back into some kind of coalition government. Would you do a deal with the Labour Party in Wales if that's what it came to?

LW: I don't want there to be a coalition government after the election, I want there to be a Plaid Cymru government. We've got an excellent programme –

AM: Most unlikely, if I may say.

LW: Well, I'm encouraged by the fact that the poll that came out last week, the gap is closing between the party that's lead the government for 17 years here in Wales and dominated Welsh politics for a century and the party of Wales. And that gap is closing and it shows to me that this is a two horse race, and if people want change and then they need to vote for it next Thursday.

AM: Okay, now Plaid has always been a staunchly pro EU party, so if, against your wishes presumably, the country votes to leave the EU in June, that's going to put you in a very strange position, because if, again Nicola Sturgeon we're going to talk to her shortly, keeps saying that that would provoke a second Scottish Referendum and therefore possibly Scotland leaving the UK, that would then leave Wales like a small appendage, as it were, to England. We'd be back to the Tudor period of the 1530s and so forth. Would that be the moment when you think Welsh independence might suddenly become a live issue again?

LW: All kinds of anomalies could be thrown up by the result of the EU Referendum, of course. I mean Wales could vote to pull out; Wales could vote to remain while England votes to pull out and that then presents us with a Constitutional crisis, you could say. But the point for us is whoever leads the government in Wales after the European Referendum, needs to be in a position to be a strong voice for Wales. And the government that we've had for 17 years has failed to do that and that's why I think it's good if people vote for a Plaid Cymru government, so that if that

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eventuality does happen then we can be assured of having the strongest possible voice for Wales in that outcome.

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