

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conferencing Via Zoom

Meeting date: 16 July 2021

Meeting time: 09.30

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In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on www.senedd.tv

- 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
(09.30) (Pages 1 – 42)
- 2 Committee remit**
(09.30–09.35) (Pages 43 – 44)
- 3 New Petitions**
(09.35–10.15)
 - 3.1 P-06-1158 The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government
(Pages 45 – 49)
 - 3.2 P-06-1159 Finally ban the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales
(Pages 50 – 57)
 - 3.3 P-06-1160 Require local Welsh exam centres to accept home-educated students for public exams
(Pages 58 – 62)



- 3.4 P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement
(Pages 63 – 69)
- 3.5 P-06-1162 Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County
(Pages 70 – 75)
- 3.6 P-06-1163 Extend the postgraduate STEMM bursary to all MSc students in Wales
(Pages 76 – 80)
- 3.7 P-06-1164 Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility
(Pages 81 – 84)
- 3.8 P-06-1165 Ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd
(Pages 85 – 88)
- 3.9 P-06-1166 Provide tax free grants to people working in the arts and to provide grant funding to arts venues
(Pages 89 – 93)
- 3.10 P-06-1167 Support Welsh travel & tourism businesses
(Pages 94 – 99)
- 3.11 P-06-1168 Consider re-doing this current academic year for students across wales
(Pages 100 – 103)
- 3.12 P-06-1169 Let Welsh citizens vote on lockdown restrictions
(Pages 104 – 107)
- 3.13 P-06-1170 An immediate independent review of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 selection process in the WPWL
(Pages 108 – 111)

4 Updates to previous petitions

(10.15-10.45)

Health and Social Services

- 4.1 P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled
(Pages 112 – 119)
- 4.2 P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK
(Pages 120 – 123)
- 4.3 P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!
(Pages 124 – 129)

Education

- 4.4 P-05-1147 Require all schools to provide daily live / recorded teaching to all pupils not returning to school
(Pages 130 – 133)

Culture, Sport and Tourism

- 4.5 P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry
(Pages 134 – 139)

Petitions that may now be resolved

- 4.6 P-05-1092 Do not delay the May 2021 elections
(Pages 140 – 141)
- 4.7 P-05-1150 Provide business rates holiday to holiday home sites in wales, the same as England
(Pages 142 – 145)
- 4.8 P-05-1151 Provide a date for the return of Organised Children's Activities for Babies & Toddlers
(Pages 146 – 149)

- 4.9 P-05-1154 Re-open the Welsh hospitality sector by 12 April 2021
(Pages 150 – 153)
- 4.10 P-05-1156 Match the funding for small businesses during lockdown with
England – including the restart grant
(Pages 154 – 156)
- 4.11 P-05-1157 Allow schools to assess students how they see fit, including the
use of open-book assessments
(Pages 157 – 162)
- 5 Papers to note**
(10.45–10.50)
- 5.1 Previous Chairs' Forum legacy report
(Pages 163 – 182)
- 5.2 Predecessor committee legacy report
(Pages 183 – 208)
- 5.3 P-05-805 Fair Deal For Supply Teachers
(Pages 209 – 212)
- 5.4 P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)
(Pages 213 – 215)
- 6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the
public from items 7 and 8 of the meeting.**
(10.50)
- 7 Committee procedures and ways of working**
(10.50–11.10) (Pages 216 – 225)
- 8 Strategic approach to Committee remit**
(11.10–11.30) (Pages 226 – 237)

Document is Restricted

Petitions Committee: Remit

16 July 2021

Purpose

1. The paper sets out the remit and responsibilities of the Petitions Committee.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is invited to note its remit.

Background

3. The rules and procedures of the Senedd are laid out in **Standing Orders**. Standing Order 16.1 requires the Senedd to establish committees with power within their remit to:

"(i) examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the government and associated public bodies;

(ii) examine legislation;

(iii) undertake other functions specified in Standing Orders; and

(iv) consider any matter affecting Wales."

4. In doing this, the Business Committee has to ensure that every area of responsibility of the Welsh Government and associated public bodies, and all matters relating to the legislative competence of the Senedd and functions of the Welsh Ministers and of the Counsel General, are subject to committee scrutiny.

Committee remit

5. The remit of this Committee, as agreed by the Senedd on 23 June 2021, is:



"[...] to carry out the functions of the responsible committee set out in Standing Order 23."

6. Further details on the wider roles and responsibilities of Senedd committees are set out in the Business Committee's report **Sixth Senedd Committees: Titles and remits**, laid before the Senedd on 23 June 2021.

Agenda Item 3.1

P-06-1158 The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government

This petition was submitted by Alex Chung, having collected a total of 315 signatures.

Text of Petition:

With one in five people here in Wales living with a disability according to ONS. It has never been more important for Wales to become a truly inclusive nation for all its citizens. We want Wales to become the first devolved nation to have its own dedicated disability Minister. With a dedicated minister focusing on disability can we make bigger strides towards, a fairer employment system, more opportunities for disabled students and greater support for mental health.

Additional Information:

Examples of statistics of disability in Wales.

(1) Over one in five people of working age in Wales have a disability.

(2) 21 per cent of rail stations in Wales do not have step-free access, and at the current rate stations will not be accessible till 2070.

(3) 1 in 4 people have a mental health problem.

(4) 330,000 unemployed disabled people last year. Last year 81.8% Non-disabled people were employed compared to 53.2% of disabled people at the same time from ONS (U.K)

These are just a few examples of why having a dedicated disability minister within the Welsh Government can sort these matters surrounding disability within Wales.

(1) <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Disability/summaryofeconomicactivityinwales-by-yeardisabledstatus-fromapril2013>

(2)Leonard Cheshire. Trains for All Campaign, 2019

(3)ONS, Psychiatric Morbidity, 2007

(4)<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/bulletins/disabilityandemploymentuk/2019>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0189-1

Petition Number: P-06-1158

Petition title: The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government

Text of petition:

With one in five people here in Wales living with a disability according to ONS. It has never been more important for Wales to become a truly inclusive nation for all its citizens. We want Wales to become the first devolved nation to have its own dedicated disability Minister. With a dedicated minister focusing on disability we can make bigger strides towards, a fairer employment system, more opportunities for disabled students and greater support for mental health.



1. Background

The First Minister **announced** his new Cabinet on 13 May 2021. No specific disability minister was appointed. Responsibility for disability strategy and policy rests with the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt, MS as part of her responsibilities for Equality and Human Rights.

The Scottish Government has a **Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government** who has similar responsibilities to the Welsh Government's Minister for Social Justice. However, there is also a **Minister for Equalities and Older People** who also has disability within their remit.

The UK Government has a **Minister of State for disabled people** who sits within the department for work and pensions. Their remit includes cross-government support for disabled people, departmental strategy for disabled people, disability allowances reform, work and health strategy for disabled people in the department for work and pensions and department for health and social care.

The Northern Ireland Executive currently has a **Department for Communities** which includes responsibility for supporting disability issues.

There are examples of other countries around the world who have ministers or cabinet members with specific responsibility for disability issues. For example the New Zealand Government has **an office for disability issues** and a minister for disability issues. The Irish Government has **a Minister of State with responsibility for disability issues** across two departments, the department for health and the department for children, equality, disability, integration and youth.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has a **Disability Equality Forum** made up of stakeholders who advise the Welsh Government on disability issues. In **a statement** in December 2020, the then Deputy First Minister, Jane Hutt MS, stated that she had chaired a meeting of the group six times since the start of the pandemic.

3. Welsh Parliament Action

Whilst disability issues have been discussed frequently in the Welsh Parliament there have been no specific debates on the issue of the appointment of a disability Minister.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.2

P-06-1159 Finally ban the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales

This petition was submitted by Robert Curtis, having collected a total of 6,514 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Ask most people in Wales and they would probably tell you that they believe the practice of setting snares for wild animals must have been banned in the dark ages, but sadly the truth is very different. In fact thousands of wild and domestic animals are killed or severely injured in Wales every year due to the use of snares.

Currently we only have a Code of best practice on their use despite the fact that the traps are fundamentally cruel. They have no place in a modern wildlife friendly Wales.

Additional Information:

Snares are thin wire nooses designed to trap and eventually cause the death of their victim. The very nature of their design means that they very often cause the limb amputation or strangulation of the trapped animal and a slow death.

To suggest a "Code of best practice" is the equivalent of having a "Code of best practice" for the use of the Electric Chair. Both are fundamentally cruel and inhumane.

It is also extremely difficult to enforce the regulations for snaring, which occurs primarily on private land in remote locations.

At a time when we are attempting to reintroduce many long lost (due to past ignorant persecution and hunting) species, such as the pine marten, red squirrel, deer, otter and even beaver, the indiscriminating design of the snare will mean that many of these protected species will end up being killed or severely injured.

These indiscriminate traps also pose a very real and unacceptable threat to our beloved family pet cats and dogs. Please make Wales snare free!

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Finally ban the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0189-2

Petition Number: P-06-1159

Petition title: Finally ban the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales

Text of petition: Ask most people in Wales and they would probably tell you that they believe the practice of setting snares for wild animals must have been banned in the dark ages, but sadly the truth is very different. In fact thousands of wild and domestic animals are killed or severely injured in Wales every year due to the use of snares.

Currently we only have a Code of best practice on their use despite the fact that the traps are fundamentally cruel. They have no place in a modern wildlife friendly Wales.

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To suggest a "Code of best practice" is the equivalent of having a "Code of best practice" for the use of the Electric Chair. Both are fundamentally cruel and inhumane.

It is also extremely difficult to enforce the regulations for snaring, which occurs primarily on private land in remote locations.

At a time when we are attempting to reintroduce many long lost (due to past ignorant persecution and hunting) species, such as the pine marten, red squirrel, deer, otter and even



beaver, the indiscriminating design of the snare will mean that many of these protected species will end up being killed or severely injured.

These indiscriminate traps also pose a very real and unacceptable threat to our beloved family pet cats and dogs. Please make Wales snare free!

1. Background

Regulation of snare use

Snaring involves trapping and restraining an animal, often prior to it being killed. It is predominantly used in the UK by farmers and other land managers to control wildlife such as foxes, rabbits, rats, grey squirrels and mink. It is also used by some to catch wildlife for its fur.

Under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* it is an offence to:

- set a self-locking snare in such a way as to be calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal;
- kill or take any wild animal using a self-locking snare;
- set a snare (or other article) in such a way as to be calculated to cause bodily injury to any animal listed in Schedule 6 of the Act, for example badgers;
- kill or take any animal listed in Schedule 6 of the Act using a snare;
- set a snare and then fail to inspect that snare (or have someone else inspect it) at least once every day;
- set any type of snare unless they are an 'authorised person' under the Act (that is, the owner or occupier of the land on which the snare is set, any person authorised by the owner or occupier of the land, or a person authorised in writing by the Local Authority for the area); and
- possess a snare for the purpose of committing any of the above offences.

Section 11(4) of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* gives the Welsh Ministers limited powers to amend the regulation of snare use, but only for the “purpose of complying with an international obligation”. For any other amendments, changes to primary legislation are needed.

Under Section 9 of the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, individuals must take reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare needs of all animals under their control are met, and that the animal is protected from pain and suffering.

Section 14 of the *Animal Welfare Act 2006* makes provision for the Welsh Ministers to publish codes of practice. In 2015, the Welsh Government published the Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control (detailed below in ‘Welsh Government action’).

The *Deer Act 1991* prohibits the use of snares to capture, kill or cause bodily harm to deer (Section 4).

The *Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996* prohibits violent acts with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering on wild mammals (Section 1).

These are currently no legislative controls in place in Wales specifically on the manufacture and sale of snares.

The UK Internal Market Act 2020

The *UK Internal Market Act 2020* established new rules for the regulation of goods across the UK. The Act established the principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination, and enshrined them in UK law as Market Access Principles.

Under the mutual recognition principle, if a good complies with the rules relating to its sale in the part of the UK in which it was produced or imported to, then it can be sold in any other part of the UK without having to meet the standards in those other parts, even if they are different.

Under the non-discrimination principle, any rules regulating how goods must be sold in one part of the UK which discriminate directly or indirectly against providers from other parts of the UK do not generally apply.

Banning the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares may come within the scope of the Market Access Principles in the *Internal Market Act 2020*. This means that the effect and enforceability of the petition’s proposal may be impacted in practice.

2. Welsh Government action

Programme for Government

The Welsh Government's recently published Programme for Government includes an objective to "ban the use of snares".

The Agriculture (Wales) Bill

In January 2021, a letter from the then Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths MS, responding to a previous petition, stated that the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, expected during the Sixth Senedd, could provide the legislative powers to "regulate all aspects of the sale and use of snares in Wales".

Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control

On 25 September 2015, the Welsh Government published a 'Code of best practice on the use of snares in fox control' (a statutory code under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*). The code summarises the current legal obligations on those using snares and sets best practice guidelines that should be followed. It is focused on controlling foxes in rural areas.

Failure to comply with such a code is not an offence in itself. However, failure to comply with a relevant provision of a code of practice may be relied upon by a court as tending to establish liability.

In April 2019, the Welsh Government published a report on the 2015 code following a recommendation from the Fifth Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) Committee that annual reports be published on the code (see 'Welsh Parliament action').

The 2019 report detailed a February 2018 stakeholder event on the code. It stated that a "wide range of stakeholders attended the event, with differing views on the use of snares". It said:

Stakeholders confirmed the Code has been widely disseminated to their members who use snares as part of their day to day job. These stakeholders believe their members are complying with the recommendations of the Code. However, there is little empirical evidence and it is acknowledged that it is difficult to quantify or evidence good practice and compliance with the Code as the setting and using of snares mostly takes place on private land.

The next steps detailed in the report included that Welsh Government officials were to meet with stakeholders again in May 2019. Evidence gathered would then be used as part of the ongoing process to determine if the 2015 code “is working or not and whether further measures including legislative options need to be considered”. Senedd Research has been unable to find any public information on the planned May 2019 event.

Taking forward Wales’ sustainable management of natural resources consultation

The previous Welsh Government’s 2017 consultation, Taking forward Wales’ sustainable management of natural resources, sought views on the regulation of snares (Chapter 10). It included seven proposals covering aspects of snare design and snare operator practice, asking whether there should be further Order making powers for the Welsh Ministers to regulate snares.

A large proportion of the respondents to the 2017 consultation opposed the use of snares in general and felt they should be completely banned.

The Welsh Government concluded that the banning of snares was not a proposal set out in the consultation, so a complete picture of peoples’ views on a ban on snares, either positive or negative, could not truly be obtained through this consultation.

There has been no further regulation of snare use following the 2017 consultation.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2016/17 the CCERA Committee carried out an inquiry into the use of snares. In June 2017 the Committee published its ‘Report on the use of snares in Wales’. It concluded:

This inquiry has shown us that there are considerable gaps in the data available to understand the scale, efficacy, and humaneness of snare-use in Wales.

We have set out recommendations that aim to establish a framework for obtaining the requisite data and to apply this data to a review of current policy.

If the efficacy and humaneness of this approach can be demonstrated through the data, then we have recommended that the Welsh Government keeps its approach under regular review. If not, then the Welsh Government must be in a position to act swiftly. [...] We have recommended that the Welsh Government prepares draft legislation now so that it is in a position to act immediately should the combined efforts of government, the industry and landowners fail to deliver the ambitions of the Code.

The Committee recommended the Welsh Government should undertake annual reviews of the 2015 code and publish a report of that review. As discussed, the Welsh Government's annual report on the 2015 code of practice was published in April 2019.

The Petitions Committee of the Fifth Senedd considered Petition P-05-1026 - to ban the snaring of wildlife for use in the fur trade. In light of the Welsh Government's intention to introduce an Agriculture Bill during the Sixth Senedd, the Committee agreed there were no further actions it could undertake ahead of the 2021 Senedd elections.

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Agenda Item 3.3

P-06-1160 Require local Welsh exam centres to accept home-educated students for public exams

This petition was submitted by Claire Woolley, having collected a total of 393 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Home-educated students need guaranteed access to suitable local examination centres at affordable prices, enabling them to have the same rights and access to qualifications as every other child in Wales.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Require local Welsh exam centres to accept home-educated students for public exams

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0189-3

Petition Number: P-06-1160

Petition title: Require local Welsh exam centres to accept home-educated students for public exams.

Text of petition: Home-educated students need guaranteed access to suitable local examination centres at affordable prices, enabling them to have the same rights and access to qualifications as every other child in Wales.



1. Background

Generally, if a young person wants to take a qualification, such as a GCSE or A level which requires an examination, the examination has to be taken at an approved examination centre, usually a secondary school or further education college. These are centres approved by the examination board that meet their requirements and the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications.

Local authorities have no legal responsibility or obligation to fund parents who choose to home educate. Parents who choose to educate their children at home must assume full financial responsibility, including books and all other resources as well as meeting the cost of any public examinations and course fees.

Welsh Government [guidance](#) for parents on elective home education, suggests that where parents have an existing and positive relationship with a school or college, they may wish to enquire whether their child could be entered there for the examinations and that the school or college will be willing to undertake the assessment of any coursework. Where there is no relationship or contact with a school or college parents need to contact an examinations board, which may be able to arrange a local centre on their behalf.

2. Public examinations in 2021

On 10 November 2020, Kirsty Williams, then Minister for Education [announced](#) that there would be no end of year examinations in summer 2021 and that instead, there would be teacher-managed assessments, including assessments that will be externally set and marked but delivered within a classroom environment under teacher supervision.

On 20 January 2021, the Minister [announced](#) that, due to the worsening public health situation and the need for remote learning until mid-February, learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales were to have their qualifications awarded through a Centre-Determined Grade model.

Grades will be determined by a learner's school or college, based on an assessment of the learner's work. Schools and colleges have been able to use a range of evidence to determine the grades to be awarded to their learners, including Non-Examination Assessment elements, mock-exams, and classwork. In addition, WJEC have offered a set of adapted past papers to enable schools to continue to assess learning within their teaching plans, providing extra support for teachers and learners.

Once quality assurance has been completed at the centre, the grade is submitted to WJEC. Learners can appeal to their school or college if they are unhappy with their grade, and to WJEC if they are unhappy with the process.

Further information can be seen on the Qualifications Wales [website](#).

3. Private candidates

Learners who are electively home educated and wishing to take qualifications are considered to be 'private candidates'. For the summer 2021 examination series Qualifications Wales has published [guidance](#) for private candidates. This sets out two routes available for private candidates.

- If a private candidate has an existing relationship with a centre, for example a learner in the centre taking a re-sit, or a candidate where a centre has already accepted a provisional entry, then these centres will undertake assessment activities using the same approach as for their own learners. The centre will produce the centre determined grades and will also be responsible for the centre review if a candidate appeals against their provisional results.
- If a private candidate does not have an existing relationship with a centre, then centres will be identified to host private candidates for assessment purposes. Private candidates will attend these centres to undertake assessment activities set by the WJEC. WJEC will mark these assessment activities, alongside a portfolio of the learner's work to produce a grade. WJEC will base their judgements on the same guidance as that used by centres, including the published grade descriptors, WJEC will also manage the appeals process for these candidates.

The Welsh Government state that they have worked with local authorities to ensure that there is at least one school or college in their local area identified as a centre to host private candidates. These can be seen on the [Welsh Government website](#).

The entry deadline for the centre-hosted route was 26 April 2021. Centres may still accept candidates via the centre assessed route after this date however, that is at the discretion of the centre and a late entry fee may apply.

The Welsh Government has provided a grant to support centres identified to host private candidates. This is to meet costs associated with supporting assessment arrangements for private candidates this year, to avoid any extra costs being passed on to candidates.

In a normal year, most private candidates pay the entry fee for their qualification, and an additional charge for the centre to administer that entry. This will remain the same for summer 2021. The available grant is intended to cover any additional costs that would be incurred this year in hosting private candidates because the assessment approach is different. Centres are expected

to only charge private candidates the same fee they would charge in previous years where exams have taken place.

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Agenda Item 3.4

P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement

This petition was submitted by Nicola Jones, having collected a total of 60 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We believe that many care leavers walk out of their placements because little thought is given to their previous experiences or to their mental wellbeing even though a baby has the right to stay with its parent/s if it is safe to do so.

Additional Information:

Many care leavers have social services intervention, when they give birth. This is often due to their history and/or lack of their own parental guidance. These care leavers will undoubtedly have experienced trauma in their childhoods and often suffer from anxiety into their adult lives. They have often never felt safe in their homes as a child and having their own space has been their only safe haven where they are totally relaxed. Currently, if there is any concern, a parent is taken away from their home, family and friends then placed in a foster home or residential home to be assessed with little thought to the parents triggers and mental wellbeing. We believe that this often causes a roller coaster of emotions and parents then walk away from placements only to forever regret a rash decision made in a moment of anxiety that wouldn't have happened if the situation had been dealt with more empathically. We want to fact find to see if a better solution for parent and child is needed.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21189-4

Petition Number: [P-06-1161](#)

Petition title: Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement

Text of petition:

We believe that many care leavers walk out of their placements because little thought is given to their previous experiences or to their mental wellbeing even though a baby has the right to stay with its parent/s if it is safe to do so.

Many care leavers have social services intervention, when they give birth. This is often due to their history and/or lack of their own parental guidance. These care leavers will undoubtedly have experienced trauma in their childhoods and often suffer from anxiety into their adult lives. They have often never felt safe in their homes as a child and having their own space has been their only safe haven where they are totally relaxed. Currently, if there is any concern, a parent is taken away from their home, family and friends then placed in a foster home or residential home to be assessed with little thought to the parents triggers and mental wellbeing. We believe that this often causes a roller coaster of emotions and parents then walk away from placements only to forever regret a rash decision made in a moment of anxiety that wouldn't have happened if the situation had been dealt with more empathically. We want to fact find to see if a better solution for parent and child is needed.



1. Context

The petition refers to parents who themselves have been looked after by a local authority as children, who in turn go on to have social services interventions when they have their own children.

‘Looked after’ is the legal term for children who are being cared for by the local authority in a range of settings. If they meet certain criteria at a specified age, they become entitled to longer term support, up until the age of 25 in certain circumstances and are legally defined as ‘care leavers’. This terminology is reflected in the Welsh Government’s [published statistics](#)

Many people prefer the term ‘care experienced’ when referring to these two groups of children and young people. Where possible, this briefing uses ‘care experienced’ to reflect the wording of the petition.

1.1. What is a parent and child placement?

Local authorities sometimes place a child and a parent together into a time limited placement, in most cases to enable them to remain together while a parenting assessment and / or court proceedings are taking place. These placements are usually used for babies rather than older children and can be either as a foster placement or a residential placement, for example in a specialist parent and child unit. They can either be local authority placements or run by private providers.

A common scenario in which they are used is when a local authority has concerns about the welfare or safety of a child and applies to the court for a court order to intervene to seek to protect the child in a planned way or on an emergency basis. As part of these public law proceedings the court may directed for a residential parenting assessment to be undertaken.

Parenting capacity is a significant focus of the Framework for the Assessment of Children and their Families as set out in the [Code of practice for assessing the needs of individuals](#) issued under Section 145 of the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

1.2. Care experienced parents

Although data is not routinely published about the number of care experienced parents who have children removed from their care, there are concerns that care experienced parents are much more likely than the general population of parents to have their own children removed into the care of the local authority.

Title:

What happens to care experienced young people when they become parents is subject of several reports and research project such as the children of 'looked after' children study. It investigated the support provided to care experienced parents and what subsequently happened to their children. Of the eight looked after children and care leavers who were parents in Wales:

Thirty-one pregnancies were discussed during the interviews: 16 live births, two ongoing pregnancies, one stillbirth, one termination and 11 miscarriages. At the point of interview, two parents continued to care for their children, but six had experienced the permanent removal of their child/ren as a result of social services intervention. Twelve of the 16 children discussed in the interviews were 'looked after' or adopted.

The Wales care-leavers and their children placed for adoption study found that:

Young people in and leaving state care are more likely than the general population to become parents at a young age. Relatively little is known about the experiences and progress of care leaver parents and their children, but emerging evidence suggests an increased risk of intergenerational state intervention.

It drew on data from the Wales Adoption Study and found that 'more than a quarter (27%) of birth mothers and a fifth (19%) of birth fathers with children placed for adoption were themselves care leavers'.

It also referred to care experienced parents being 'distinguishable from other birth parents by their own experiences of abuse and neglect', going on to say:

Care leaver birth mothers were also more likely than their non-care leaver counterparts to have diagnosed mental health problems and were less likely to appeal the adoption plan. The profiles of children placed for adoption between care leaver and non-care leaver birth parents were similar.

A Nuffield Foundation study in England found that a high number of women who repeatedly appear before family courts and whose children are subsequently removed into public care or adoption have themselves been in care.

Court records showed that 40% of a sample of 354 mothers in repeat proceedings had been in foster care or children's homes themselves with a further 14% living in private or informal relationships away from their parents.

2. Data collection and publication

Data on the number of 'babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement', as referred to in the petition, is not published. There may be a number of agencies involved but primarily Local Authorities and CAF/CASS.

There is a range of data about care experienced children that is collected from local authorities and subsequently published by the Welsh Government.

Cafcass Cymru supports children and families in family court proceedings, advising the courts on the best course of action on what it considers to be in the best interests of individual children. The statistics it publishes are in its latest Annual Report 2019-20.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or amended to reflect subsequent changes.

P-05-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.07.21

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain the petition further. I'm sure the petition could have had a different heading and would have had further signatures if the wider public understood the reason for it.

I am a foster carer and about four years ago found out that a young woman, who had been in foster care, was pregnant. I knew this young woman would need some support and advice around childcare so took her under my wing. She, unfortunately, experienced two miscarriages before finally having a pregnancy that went full term and the baby was born in August 2020. By this time we had (and still have) a good relationship where the young mum now trusts me (believe me, this is not easy for children/young people who believe they have never had any reason to trust adults).

Prior to the birth of the baby we had organised for mum and baby to come to me straight to my home a couple of weeks but then social services became involved. The mother hadn't done anything wrong. She'd struggled as a teenager so everything was historical other than one 'row' with her boyfriend of 5 years during the pregnancy. I am not condoning the argument and I explained to the mum that, even in the womb, this can impact on a baby and this was taken on board. Unfortunately, social services put this down to 'emotional abuse' and put the baby on the child protection register. I tried to intervene and even took 'mother and baby training' so that mum and baby could come to stay with me in an official capacity. This was refused. This then resulted in Mum being taken from hospital within hours of having a difficult birth, made to walk up two flights of stairs to pack her things – without support, and taken to a foster placement. This mothers anxiety was through the roof and after the difficulties she'd experienced through her life ie. domestic violence in the home, rape, child sexual exploitation to name but a few, this was the last thing she needed.

Social Services told mum that if she didn't complete the 3 month placement then the baby would not be going home with her. The placement was "voluntary" so hadn't gone to court and mum was terrified to allow the case to go to court even though I felt that she would be allowed home. I spoke to the solicitor she'd had on legal aid and, to be frank, she was useless. However, she did tell me that if she'd had a pound for every mother who walked out of a placement she would be

extremely rich. The mother I'm talking about, at the height of her anxiety, feeling that 'social services were going to take her baby anyway' did walk from the placement. Fortunately for her she phoned me absolutely distraught and I was able to persuade her to go back immediately. She completed the placement – although social services drew it out blaming Covid, and she's at home with a very well cared for baby girl who is meeting all her milestones and who has a very strong bond with her mother.

This was the first experience I'd had of a young mum going into a mother and baby placement and the anxiety it caused. I am not adverse to this happening where a baby is truly at risk but feel that there is an extremely high risk of babies being taken into care and put up for adoption unnecessarily because the system is extremely flawed and a mothers reaction to extreme anxiety isn't taken into consideration. It is a false environment that the parents are put into and the result is then false as a parent wouldn't walk away from their own home. Parents feel they are doomed to failure and being spied upon so this situation is setting parents up to fail. People will argue that parents should do what is necessary for their child and this is true but what happens if parents feel the child deserves better and they aren't good enough because of their past experiences. I believe these young parents deserve a chance to have a happy family. Support was available for this mum from a qualified person and was ignored. Mum could have had support in the home but this was also refused.

This example mum had somebody to support her when she was feeling anxious – something many care leavers don't have. If we can find out how many babies successfully go home with their care leaver mothers (or don't) then we can ascertain if this is the best way to help these young people. The more children taken into care, the more children at risk of having mental health issues. Just because a parent is care experienced does not mean that they are incapable of being good parents – many deserve to have a happy family and just need some help with this. With the recent launch of the NEST framework I am hoping that the Senedd will agree that this needs to be addressed and help children now and in the future to stay with the people who love them if it is safe for them to do so.

Kind regards,

Agenda Item 3.5

P-06-1162 Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County

This petition was submitted by Sian Davies, having collected a total of 138 signatures.

Text of Petition:

During these local lockdowns it has become very obvious that Cynon Valley (mostly Aberdare) is totally disconnected to the rest of Rhondda Cynon Taff. All of the local amenities in our area has been moved to Merthyr – our court, hospital, registry for births/deaths, our shopping centre, etc. This became very obvious when the residents of Aberdare have been told we cannot travel to Merthyr but has to travel all the way to Llantrisant, have you ever tried going there on public transport either?

Additional Information:

There is a general concensus in Aberdare that we are the poor relation to the spending being used in Pontypridd/Talbot Green etc because they are based closer to the Capital, Rhondda gets a lot of funding as classed as a deprived area, and the residents of Cynon Valley have to fund raise to get any ammenites for example the splash pad in the park, yet Ponty got the Lido and splash park. They had all the relief road around Church Village years ago and we are still waiting for the road to be duelled between us and Merthyr, even though it is classed as one of the most dangerous roads in South Wales. With the population of RCT being the 3rd largest in Wales just behind the two cities of Swansea and Cardiff, and covering one of the largest areas behind Powys, it is clear this County is not fit for purpose. With forward thinking Merthyr County, we believe we would flourish and be a better run county especially with local lockdowns looking at becoming the thing of the future.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central

Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: RS21/0189

Petition Number: P-06-1162

Petition title: Break up the County of Rhondda Cynon Taff and join the Cynon Valley to Merthyr County

Text of petition: During these local lockdowns it has become very obvious that Cynon Valley (mostly Aberdare) is totally disconnected to the rest of Rhondda Cynon Taff. All of the local amenities in our area has been moved to Merthyr - our court, hospital, registry for births/deaths, our shopping centre, etc.

This became very obvious when the residents of Aberdare have been told we cannot travel to Merthyr but has to travel all the way to Llantrisant, have you ever tried going there on public transport either?

There is a general consensus in Aberdare that we are the poor relation to the spending being used in Pontypridd/Talbot Green etc because they are based closer to the Capital, Rhondda gets a lot of funding as classed as a deprived area, and the residents of Cynon Valley have to fund raise to get any amenities for example the splash pad in the park, yet Ponty got the Lido and splash park. They had all the relief road around Church Village years ago and we are still waiting for the road to be duelled between us and Merthyr, even though it is classed as one of the most dangerous roads in South Wales.

With the population of RCT being the 3rd largest in Wales just behind the two cities of Swansea and Cardiff, and covering one of the largest areas behind Powys, it is clear this County is not fit for purpose.



With forward thinking Merthyr County, we believe we would flourish and be a better run county especially with local lockdowns looking at becoming the thing of the future.

1. Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (as amended) (“the Act”) established a legal process for conducting **boundary** and **electoral arrangement reviews** in Wales. The Act established the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”), an independent Welsh Government sponsored body. Its role is to monitor and review the areas and electoral arrangements relevant to the local government structure in Wales.

Section 14 of the Act provides the Welsh Ministers with a **general power of direction** of the Commission. The Commission must comply with any direction (general or specific) given to it by the Welsh Ministers.

Boundary Review of Principal Areas

The Commission may of its own initiative or at the request of a Principal Council (local authority), conduct a **review of one or more principal areas** (local authority boundaries) in Wales. Section 23 of the Act sets out the requirements for a review of a principal area.

Following a review of a principal area boundaries, the Commission must make proposals to the Welsh Ministers. In their proposals, the Commission may propose such principal area changes as appropriate, including:

- altering the boundary of a principal area;
- abolishing a principal area; or
- constituting a new principal area.

The Commission has published guidance on the procedures in relation to principal area reviews in Wales. It has not conducted a **review of a principal area** since the passing of the 2013 Act.

Other types of boundary reviews

The Commission also has powers to conduct a **review of community boundaries** within a local authority area, and to review **preserved counties** and **Seaward boundaries**. The most recent community review to be undertaken was in Monmouthshire, with the [Commission's Final Recommendations](#) published in January 2019.

Electoral arrangements review

The Act also places a duty on the Commission to conduct a review of **electoral arrangements** for principal areas, at least once in every review period. The Commission's website states that the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that:

within each local authority area, electoral arrangements seek to achieve parity. Utilising the existing community structure within a local authority, an electoral review will take into account community identities, electoral equality and consultation feedback to ensure that our proposals uphold the interests of effective and convenient local government for the electorate within Wales.

The Commission must publish a timetable for conducting all 22 reviews, publish draft proposals, consult extensively and submit its final recommendations to the Welsh Ministers. The latest information on the current electoral review process can be found on the [Welsh Government's website](#).

2. Welsh Government action

The 2013 Act allows Welsh Ministers to give the Commission directions relating to the exercise of its review functions. The Welsh Ministers also have powers to direct the Commission to conduct a review, or a further review of a particular area following the Commission's recommendations.

The direction may specify particular matters that the Welsh Ministers wish the Commission to have regards to when conducting the review.

Section 37 of the 2013 Act makes provision for the Welsh Ministers to implement the Commission's recommendations in relation to a review under section 23 (review of principal area boundary). The Welsh Minister may, by Order, 'implement any recommendation, **with or without modification**' or 'decide to take **no action**'.

The Welsh Government has not made any statement or provided information relating to this petition.

3. Senedd action

Orders and regulations made under sections 37 to 39, and 43 of the 2013 Act (save s.37(1) and 41(1)), are only subject to the requirements and procedures set out in those and associated sections. In practice, what this means is that these can be thought of as ‘**no procedure**’ statutory instruments and, as such, they are not subject to scrutiny by the Senedd via either the negative or affirmative procedure.

It should be noted however, that the specific procedures set out in the relevant sections impose a number of scrutiny type requirements such as consultation with specified parties, time limits, and where being made other than by Welsh Government, approval of the Welsh Ministers. The Welsh Ministers will therefore make a decision on whether to implement the recommendations of the Commission by Order, with or without modification – or not at all following a period of representation.

This issue has not been considered by the Senedd.

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Agenda Item 3.6

P-06-1163 Extend the postgraduate STEMM bursary to all MSc students in Wales

This petition was submitted by Rachel Wrathall, having collected a total of 88 signatures.

Text of Petition:

In June 2019 Welsh Government announced a bursary scheme to increase the number of Welsh graduates who remained or returned to Wales to undertake a master's degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics or Medicine (also known as 'STEMM' subjects). This funding currently only extends to traditional Universities, excluding students who choose a STEMM Masters through alternative providers. This excludes some students, who need more flexibility in STEMM subject matter or course delivery.

Additional Information:

The Diamond review recommended that efforts are made "to enable students to study in the mode that best supports their circumstances". (The Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales, 2016).

Currently students studying for STEMM Masters at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) School of the Environment in Machynlleth are excluded from Welsh Government's STEMM bursary funding. The courses provided at CAT have a specific sustainability focus, which aligns with Welsh Government efforts to change the course of Wales onto a more sustainable path (e.g. through principles outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).

Teaching at CAT is flexible, and unlike traditional universities, enables students to study a taught Masters whilst continuing work/caring responsibilities.

We believe that the exclusion of STEMM students at organisations like CAT from STEMM bursary funding is counter to the STEMM bursary policy aims.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Extend the postgraduate STEMM bursary to all MSc students in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/189-6

Petition Number: P-06-1163

Petition title: Extend the postgraduate STEMM bursary to all MSc students in Wales.

Text of petition: In June 2019 Welsh Government announced a bursary scheme to increase the number of Welsh graduates who remained or returned to Wales to undertake a master's degree in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics or Medicine (also known as 'STEMM' subjects). This funding currently only extends to traditional Universities, excluding students who choose a STEMM Masters through alternative providers. This excludes some students, who need more flexibility in STEMM subject matter or course delivery.

1. Key points

In August 2019, Welsh Government announced three new incentives for students to do their Master's degree in Wales. One of those incentives was a £2,000 bursary for graduates of all ages to study in Wales for a Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics or Medicine (STEMM) Master's degree – this is the scheme to which the petition refers.

It was announced at the time that the incentives would be administered to Welsh higher education providers via the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).



At the time of writing, whilst students on specific Masters level courses taught at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) (the provider referenced in the petition) can receive student financial support for fees and maintenance, the provider itself, CAT, is not eligible to receive public funding from HEFCW.

This is because CAT does not meet the relevant definition of a higher education institution needed to allow HEFCW to fund it. HEFCW is therefore unable to allocate incentive scheme funding to CAT (and other similar alternative providers) for its relevant Masters courses.

To allow HEFCW to consider allocating public funding to CAT and similar alternative providers in Wales, CAT would need to seek to be designated by Welsh Government as a higher education institution using powers under Section 129 of the Education Reform Act 1988.

The basis of the continued allocation of the STEMM Masters incentive scheme has been set out by HEFCW in this circular, and its overall basis for funding is set out in paragraph 6 of this circular.

2. Further detail

Public funding for higher education provision and higher education student financial support is a complex matter. The law is such that students can conceivably receive Welsh Government financial support to undertake a course, whilst the provider itself is not eligible to receive public funding directly. This is because the law pertaining to funding providers, and the law pertaining to awarding student financial support, are separate.

2.1. Funding providers

Public funding is released to providers by HEFCW using powers set out in the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (the 1992 Act). These powers include the specific nature of activities eligible for funding and the particular types of institutions that can be funded. The activities eligible for funding are mainly those undertaken by 'Higher Education Institutions'.

Therefore key test in this situation under the 1992 Act is if a provider comes within the definition of a "Higher Education Institution". Section 65(5) of the 1992 Act defines a higher education institution as 'a university, an institution conducted by a higher education corporation or a designated institution.'

Currently CAT does not fit into any of those definitions of a Higher Education Institution. It would therefore be for Welsh Government (using its powers in Section 129 of the Education Reform Act 1988) to determine whether or not it should be designated as an institution eligible to receive funding from HEFCW.

2.2. Funding students

Public funding is made available to students for tuition and maintenance support under the student support regulations made by Welsh Government using its powers under the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998. This is done by courses being “designated” for student support. Designation can either be automatic in certain circumstances, or a provider must seek to have each course designated individually by Welsh Government (a process which HEFCW undertakes on behalf of Welsh Government).

In this instance, CAT’s courses are not eligible to be automatically designated, and so it has successfully applied for some of its Masters provision to be specifically designated by Welsh Government for student support purposes. This means students studying such courses can access the Welsh Government’s Masters Finance student support package. Most alternative providers would need to follow the same process to allow their students to access Welsh Government student financial support.

3. Conclusion

Students studying specific Masters courses that have been designated by Welsh Government for the purposes of student financial support, can receive the Masters Finance package. This will be true for other alternative providers in Wales who have also had their courses designated for the purposes of student financial support (either automatically or individually).

But as CAT does not come within the definition of a Higher Education Institution, and nor has it been designated as such by Welsh Government using its powers under the 1988 Act, it cannot currently receive HEFCW STEMM incentive scheme funding. Under current law, is a matter for CAT, or any other alternative provider in the same position, to seek to be designated as such by Welsh Government, and for Welsh Government to designate it so. The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill that Welsh Government intends to introduce this Senedd may in future amend the requirements for an institution to be eligible to receive public funding.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.7

P-06-1164 Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility

This petition was submitted by Alanna Louise Virk, having collected a total of 94 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Too many children are suffering in silence, self harming or committing suicide. Encouraging children to be kind to each other is not working. Bullies do not face the consequences of their actions. Make bullying and harassment a criminal offence for children of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years+).

Additional Information:

More often than not it is the victims and their families that deal with the consequences of bullying, not the bullies. Many children commit suicide or have their lives destroyed, but bullies live the rest of their lives without facing any repercussions or consequences for their actions. Children will often not speak out because they feel powerless and believe that the bullying can't be stopped. If it was made law then children may feel more confident in speaking out against their bullies. Bullying and harassment in the workplace is protected under the Equality Act 2010. Why can't children have those same protections?

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Wrexham
- North Wales

Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0189

Petition Number: P-06-1164

Petition title: Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility

Text of petition: Too many children are suffering in silence, self harming or committing suicide. Encouraging children to be kind to each other is not working. Bullies do not face the consequences of their actions. Make bullying and harassment a criminal offence for children of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years+)

More often than not it is the victims and their families that deal with the consequences of bullying, not the bullies. Many children commit suicide or have their lives destroyed, but bullies live the rest of their lives without facing any repercussions or consequences for their actions. Children will often not speak out because they feel powerless and believe that the bullying can't be stopped. If it was made law then children may feel more confident in speaking out against their bullies. Bullying and harassment in the workplace is protected under the Equality Act 2010. Why can't children have those same protections?



1. Background

1.1. Legal duties

A range of legislation applicable to Wales aim to protect children and young people from abuse, including bullying:

- The Education Act 2002 places a duty of care on schools to protect all their learners and provide a safe, healthy environment.
- The Equality Act 2010 places obligations on schools to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not, and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not.
- The Education Act 2002 places a legal duty on maintained schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires the headteacher of a maintained school to determine measures to encourage good behaviour and respect for others and prevent all forms of bullying amongst learners.

In addition, some online bullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

The age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is 10 years old. Children between 10 and 17 can be arrested and taken to court if they commit a crime.

2. Welsh Government action

In Wales, the legislation is supported by Welsh Government guidance. The Welsh Government published **Challenging bullying Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools** in November 2019. This replaced the previous non-statutory guidance, Respecting Others.

Governing bodies must have regard to the statutory guidance when exercising their functions relating to the conduct of a school and making arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people who are learners at the school. Governing bodies must have regard to the statutory guidance when exercising their functions relating to promoting good behaviour and discipline at schools. The guidance states:

the headteacher must act in accordance with the behaviour policy, which all schools are required by the [Education and Inspections] 2006 Act to have. The Welsh Government expects a school's anti-bullying policy to set out clearly how it will address bullying and strategies for challenging bullying behaviour.

The guidance also states that some cases of bullying might be a safeguarding matter or require involvement of the police and states that:

The police should be notified as soon as possible if it is suspected that a criminal offence has been committed against a child or young person.

3. Welsh Parliament action

Between 2019 and 2020, the Petitions Committee considered a petition, [P-05-862 Tackling school bullying](#) that called for a standard bullying framework enforceable by law and that bullying be recorded and acted upon. The Committee heard oral evidence from the then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams and sought written evidence from the Children's Commissioner for Wales and childrens' charities. The Children's Commissioner was satisfied with the statutory status of the new anti-bullying guidance. The Committee agreed that there was little further that the Committee could achieve at that time and agreed to close the petition.

4. UK Parliament action

In 2018, the UK Parliament Petitions Committee considered a petition, [Make Bullying a Criminal Offence](#). The UK Government responded that:

Laws are already in place to protect people when bullying behaviour constitutes a criminal offence. The government does not plan to introduce additional legislation for bullying behaviour.

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Agenda Item 3.8

P-06-1165 Ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd

This petition was submitted by Russell Gwilym Morris, having collected a total of 91 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We call upon the Senedd to ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd. The Senedd is a workplace and most workplaces won't allow alcohol on their premises. There are also many establishments within the capital that Members of the Senedd can go to after a days work to unwind, just the same as the rest of the citizens in Wales do.

People already feel there is a them and us culture within politics, this would go a little way to help changing that perception.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

Ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0089-8

Petition Number: P-06-1165

Petition title: Ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd.

Text of petition:

We call upon the Senedd to ban the sale and consumption of alcohol within the Senedd. The Senedd is a workplace and most workplaces won't allow alcohol on their premises. There are also many establishments within the capital that Members of the Senedd can go to after a days work to unwind, just the same as the rest of the citizens in Wales do.

People already feel there is a them and us culture within politics, this would go a little way to help changing that perception.



1. Background

The management of the Senedd estate, including any restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol, is a matter for the Senedd Commission.

Catering services in the Senedd are outsourced to an external contractor, Charlton House & Co Group (“Charlton”).

Under the contract, Charlton manages the Senedd’s restaurant, coffee shop, tea rooms, public café and provides catering services for Senedd hospitality and events. Charlton holds a licence for serving alcohol on Senedd premises.

2. Alcohol policy on Senedd estate

The Senedd introduced a policy in September 2014 providing that alcohol would not be served on the estate before 18:00pm.

The Senedd Commission’s *Policy for the use of the Assembly Estate*¹ states:

14.1 **No alcohol** for consumption on the Assembly estate **will be sold** or served by our licensees **before 6pm during the week in term time**. If the Assembly is not sitting, these rules may be relaxed on occasion, but only with the Llywydd’s express consent, which can be sought via the Venues team. [RS emphasis]

This restriction is also reflected in the Senedd’s Visitor Code of Conduct.

¹ This is an internal document.

Title:

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Agenda Item 3.9

P-06-1166 Provide tax free grants to people working in the arts and to provide grant funding to arts venues

This petition was submitted by Natalie Bowen, having collected a total of 50 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Right now, the UK government is encouraging people who work in the arts to retrain. We think this is wrong and that people who work in the arts should be given grants to enable them to keep entertaining people. The arts are the life blood of our community and we should support them financially.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

Provide tax free grants to people working in the arts and to provide grant funding to arts venues

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: RS21/0189-9

Petition Number: P-06-1166

Petition title: Provide tax free grants to people working in the arts and to provide grant funding to arts venues

Text of petition: Right now, the UK government is encouraging people who work in the arts to retrain. We think this is wrong and that people who work in the arts should be given grants to enable them to keep entertaining people. The arts are the life blood of our community and we should support them financially.



1. Background

Arts funding in Wales is primarily distributed by the Arts Council of Wales. It distributes funding, mostly from the Welsh Government and National Lottery, to arts venues, organisations and practitioners.

Bodies providing grant funding do not determine the tax-status of that funding. Taxation is generally a reserved matter, and is determined by the UK Parliament and the Treasury.

2. Welsh Government action

2.1. Support for the arts

In the **2021-22 budget** the Welsh Government allocated £43 million to the Arts Council. This is an increase of 30% from a **2020-21 final budget** allocation of £33 million. The Arts Council uses this funding according to directions given by the Welsh Government.

Throughout the pandemic specific funding has been provided to arts venues, organisations and practitioners in Wales.

In July 2020 the Welsh Government announced a **Cultural Recovery Fund**. This followed the Welsh Government receiving £59 million in consequential funding flowing from a UK Government package of support for culture in England. The Welsh Government initially allocated £53 million to this fund, before adding further funding in subsequent months. The Welsh funding is distributed by the Arts Council, the Welsh Government and local authorities.

The Welsh Government has **said** that this fund “provided £63.3 million in 2020 to 2021 to support theatres, music venues, heritage sites, events, museums, libraries, galleries, independent cinemas and freelancers”.

It was made up of three main elements. The Arts Council administered funding of more than £18 million to support 170 organisations, supporting national and local theatres and art galleries. More than 1,000 jobs have been supported.

The Freelancers Fund provided a total of £18 million of grant support to 3,500 freelancers who have been unable to work during the pandemic. This funding was distributed by local authorities.

Welsh Government-administered element of the fund provided £27 million to support the culture, creative, events and heritage sectors. More than 500 organisations received funding.

Title:

In March 2021 the Welsh Government **extended** the Cultural Recovery Fund with additional funding of “up to £30 million”.

2.2. Tax status of grants

Bodies providing grant funding do not determine the tax-status of that funding. Taxation is generally a reserved matter, and is determined by the UK Parliament and Treasury.

This was demonstrated by the Welsh Government’s May 2020 **£500 extra payment** for social care workers.

There was **coverage in the media** in June 2020, which reported that tax and National Insurance contributions will be payable on the £500 payment. In the **original announcement on 1 May**, the First Minister had called on the UK Government not to tax the extra payment, enabling social care workers to keep the full amount, and stated that Welsh Government were working with the Department for Work and Pensions to make sure it did not impact on people’s benefit entitlements. The report stated that Welsh Government and HMRC ‘have said they were working together, but with no solution, the UK Government has asked the Welsh Government how it would like to proceed’.

However, HM Treasury maintained their position, and **social care workers were taxed** on the £500 bonus.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The impact of the pandemic on the arts was looked at by the previous Senedd’s Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee. Relevant publications included:

- **Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the arts sector** (June 2020)
- **Turn up the volume: an inquiry into the live music industry** (December 2020)
- **Report on further work on the impact of COVID-19 on the arts** (December 2020)

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.10

P-06-1167 Support Welsh travel & tourism businesses

This petition was submitted by Matthew Sutton, having collected a total of 138 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Coronavirus has had a huge impact on all businesses across Wales, but from the start the travel and tourism industry has had a huge financial impact.

From the original 5 mile rule, to being allowed to trade for just 7 weeks, and now local travel restrictions re-imposed across much of Wales.

Additional Information:

The tourism industry in particular coach holidays takes people to seaside resorts, towns and cities putting plenty of money through local hospitality and retail businesses.

We have received very little funding, and the latest announcement on the economic resilience fund will not be enough to support all the businesses across wales that need the support.

There have been support packages put in place for many business types, but ours seems to be the worst affected and least supported.

We are kindly asking for your support to let the Welsh Government discuss a plan of helping our industry survive this pandemic.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East

Support Welsh travel & tourism businesses

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR21/0194-10

Petition Number: P-06-1167

Petition title: Support Welsh travel and tourism businesses

Text of petition: Coronavirus has had a huge impact on all businesses across Wales, but from the start the travel and tourism industry has had a huge financial impact.

From the original 5 mile rule, to being allowed to trade for just 7 weeks, and now local travel restrictions re-imposed across much of Wales.

The tourism industry in particular coach holidays takes people to seaside resorts, towns and cities putting plenty of money through local hospitality and retail businesses.

We have received very little funding, and the latest announcement on the economic resilience fund will not be enough to support all the businesses across Wales that need the support.

There have been support packages put in place for many business types, but ours seems to be the worst affected and least supported.

We are kindly asking for your support to let the Welsh Government discuss a plan of helping our industry survive this pandemic.



1. Background

The most recent tourism barometer survey undertaken by the Welsh Government found that **around a quarter of tourism businesses in Wales lost over 80% of their normal revenue in 2020**, while over half of the businesses in the sector saw revenues fall by more than 60%. Highlighting the immense challenges faced by the sector, the research reports that **only 43% of tourism businesses expect to survive for longer than the next six months**.

The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) Wales, who represent bus and coach operators across Wales, have stated in their coach strategy for Wales that:

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on an industry that is normally fundamentally healthy and profitable. However, with lockdown restrictions gradually easing, it is likely that trips can get underway this summer and is an opportunity for the industry to play a leading role in Wales economic recovery.

CPT Wales also highlights that 8 in 10 UK coach operators have seen their turnover decrease by at least 50% during the pandemic, and 2 in 10 have seen turnover fall by at least 90%.

Llwybr Newydd, the Welsh Government's transport strategy, was published in March 2021 and sets out mini-plans for supporting different transport sectors to deliver the Welsh Government's long-term priorities. This addresses bus services, but not coach services.

Specifically looking at the tourism sector, Let's Shape the Future sets out the Welsh Government's approach to economic reconstruction. In relation to travel trade, this states that there are specific impacts including:

- The pivotal role of visitor attractions within the tour and coach holiday offer; if some attractions do not re-open or restrict access – such as to groups – that will create issues for operators to honour their advertised tours/holidays;
- Potential supply chain issues throughout the sector may further hamper the successful re-start of travel trade business in 2021 and beyond.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has supported businesses through a number of different funding streams since the start of the pandemic. There have been a range of different eligibility criteria for these funds, which will have determined whether individual travel and tourism businesses will have been able to receive support. While it has provided sector-specific support to the bus sector,

coach operators who do not offer public bus services or operate school transport will not have received any sector-specific support.

The Welsh Government has set out why it believes the business support it has offered during the pandemic is more generous than that available in England.

In March 2020, the Welsh Government announced grants for businesses who pay business rates. All businesses with a rateable value of up to £12,000 that were eligible for Small Business Rate Relief received a grant of £10,000, for up to two properties per local authority area. Eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses occupying properties with a rateable value of between £12,001 and £51,000 received a grant of £25,000.

In the first few months of the pandemic, the Welsh Government ran two phases of the Economic Resilience Fund. This provided support for businesses who did not receive support through other Welsh or UK Government schemes, based on the number of people they employed.

In October 2020, two further grants were provided through the Economic Resilience Fund. The Lockdown Business Fund supported businesses affected by the ‘firebreak’ lockdown between 23 October and 9 November. It provided grants of up to £5,000 to businesses who pay business rates, and discretionary grants of up to £2,000 to other impacted businesses. To support businesses with economic recovery and future sustainability, Business Development Grants of up to £200,000 were available, and £20 million of funding available was reserved for tourism and hospitality businesses.

Between December 2020 and January 2021, the Welsh Government announced two rounds of funding through the Economic Resilience Fund. One of these supported businesses in affected sectors and their supply chains who pay business rates and were impacted by the lockdown and restrictions put in place, providing grants of up to £10,000. The other provided discretionary grants of up to £4,000 to businesses in affected sectors and their supply chains who do not pay business rates, and were impacted by the restrictions.

Between January 2021 and March 2021, the Welsh Government ran two rounds of the ERF Sector Specific Grant, which supported eligible businesses in the tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors. The first round supported eligible businesses of all sizes, providing support according to the number of staff employed by a business. The second round provided support to eligible businesses employing at least 10 full-time equivalent staff.

In March 2021 the Welsh Government provided additional support to eligible businesses in sectors impacted by ongoing restrictions of up to £5,000 to businesses who pay business rates.

In May 2021, following the Senedd elections, the Welsh Government announced support of between £2,500 and £25,000 for businesses still affected by coronavirus restrictions.

Subsequently, the Welsh Government also **decided that** eligible businesses who were affected by the phased move to Alert Level 1 would receive an additional payment of between £875 and £5,000 depending on their size and circumstance, to cover the period up to the end of June.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Fifth Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee explored the impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector in its inquiry into **Long-term recovery from Covid**. This report concluded that support for recovery needs to be tailored to address specific issues, such as tourism, which was described by FSB Wales as going through 'three winters'.

The Committee recommended that:

Recommendation 24: The Welsh Government must prioritise ongoing sector-specific support for hard hit sectors such as non-essential retail, hair and beauty, tourism and hospitality, arts and culture. It should set out its proposals for doing this in 2021-22, making clear where additional funding from the UK Government will be needed.

Recommendation 26: Welsh Government should work with the tourism and hospitality sectors on a destination management strategy, including the development of campaigns to attract people to Wales for the 2021 season in a sustainable way for businesses and communities.

4. Sector-specific support for coach operators in the rest of the UK

CPT Wales has **called for** the Welsh Government to **introduce a Coach Recovery Fund to provide £7.5 million in targeted support to coach operators while social distancing is in place**. It suggests this fund should be based on support available in Scotland. It has **also asked the Welsh Government to ensure that any future rounds of funding, such as the Economic Resilience Fund, are open to coach operators**.

The **Scottish Coach Operators Fund** is administered by Visit Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. It was **established** to "help support coach tour operators while restrictions on travel are still in place, and to help them prepare to restart operations when restrictions are lifted." It provides targeted support to assist businesses that operate the newest and most environmentally friendly vehicle fleet, along with **other eligibility criteria**.

The **first strand** of this funding provided £8.3 million to coach operators for whom coach tourism and private coach hire make up more than 55% of their total turnover. The **second strand** of this

funding provided £1.6 million in support to coach operators for whom coach tourism and private coach hire make up more than 40% of their total turnover.

Northern Ireland has also provided support to bus and coach operators through two rounds of the **Bus Operator Financial Assistance Scheme**. This supported bus and coach operators with costs of ongoing overheads and expenses incurred. The funding was for operators whose “main business activity is the carriage of passengers and their luggage for reward and they have suffered a significant adverse impact on income arising from the loss of business due to the Coronavirus Restrictions”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.11

P-06-1168 Consider re-doing this current academic year for students across wales

This petition was submitted by Hayley Whittington-Pike, having collected a total of 184 signatures.

Text of Petition:

I implore the government to consider re-doing this academic year, should school closures become part of the “fire break” restrictions. It isn’t fair to expect the children to catch up with last years missed education, whilst having a stop/start academic year this year. Our children should not be prevented from achieving their full potential, and nor should we as parents be accepting that they just – get by. Not all children have the same luxuries of parents at home to help/access to resources.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport East
- South Wales East

Consider re-doing this current academic year for students across wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: RS21/0189-11

Petition Number: P-06-1168

Petition title: Consider re-doing this current academic year for students across Wales.

Text of petition: I implore the government to consider re-doing this academic year, should school closures become part of the “fire break” restrictions. It isn’t fair to expect the children to catch up with last years missed education, whilst having a stop/start academic year this year. Our children should not be prevented from achieving their full potential, and nor should we as parents be accepting that they just - get by. Not all children have the same luxuries of parents at home to help/access to resources

1. Summary

- There is a general recognition that the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected children and young people’s education due to the disruption to schooling and the loss of several months of face to face teaching during periods of school closures.



- Rather than pupils repeating the academic years affected, the Welsh Government has provided funding for additional staff in schools to support their recovery from the disruption wrought by the pandemic.
- The new Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, has recently published an education COVID-19 recovery plan, building on the interventions by his predecessor, Kirsty Williams.

2. Disruption to education from the pandemic

There have been two prolonged periods whereby schools have closed to pupils other than vulnerable pupils and children of key workers for whom there was no safe alternative:

- From 23 March 2020 until the start of academic year 2021/22 in September (other than for several 'check in, catch up and prepare' days in July).
- Between the final week of the term before Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021 (infant pupils returned in late February, junior pupils in mid March while secondary pupils not in exam year groups did not return at all until after Easter).

[Note that secondary schools closed for an additional week following the October 2020 half term during the autumn 'firebreak'. There have also been instances where pupils have experienced disruption to face to face learning whilst schools have generally being open, due to 'bubbles' or whole year groups having to learn from home for a certain time due to positive cases amongst peers.]

During such periods of school closures, there was remote educational provision via the online platform, Hwb. However, there are many concerns about the impact on many learners, including those who are already disadvantaged, and the variation in the remote provision by schools. The schools inspectorate, Estyn, has published [reports on experiences in schools](#) in autumn term 2020 and spring term 2021 respectively.

A [Children's Commissioner survey in January 2021](#) of 20,000 children found that 35% did not feel confident about their learning, compared to 25% in May 2020. 63% of 12-18 year olds were worried about falling behind.

3. The Welsh Government's response

The Welsh Government has allocated funding to a ['Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards' programme](#), which includes 1,800 additional teaching staff, to address the negative impact of the pandemic on pupils' education.

However, in doing so, it has sought to avoid an "unhelpful 'catch up' narrative" about lost learning, which [The British Psychological Society says](#) places "unnecessary psychological pressure" on

Title:

children and young people. This was confirmed by the new Minister for Education and the Welsh Language in his first **Plenary statement on 26 May 2021**.

On 16 June 2021, the Welsh Government published its **“Renew and reform”** education COVID-19 recovery plan, which focuses on supporting learners’ wellbeing and progression. The Minister’s accompanying **statement** said the plan builds on the interventions already made over the past year, including recruiting and retaining more than 1,800 full-time equivalent staff.

There is a particular emphasis on early years, post-16 and learners making transitions, exam year groups and vulnerable and disadvantaged learners (including Looked After Children and pupils with Additional Learning Needs).

In order to ensure schools are fully focused on educational recovery from COVID-19 and in recognition of the exceptional circumstances of the last year to eighteen months, the Welsh Government has also **suspended performance measures and Estyn inspections**. (Another reason Estyn has paused routine inspections is to work with schools in preparing for the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales in September 2022.)

The Welsh Government has allocated over £150 million in 2021-22, in addition to over £220 million in 2020-21 for the education sector’s response to COVID-19. As in other parts of the UK, this level of funding is less than what some experts warn is needed. For example, the **Education Policy Institute (EPI) estimate** the Welsh Government needs to spend £600-£900 million.

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Agenda Item 3.12

P-06-1169 Let Welsh citizens vote on lockdown restrictions

This petition was submitted by Lee Walters, having collected a total of 289 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Let Welsh citizens vote on lockdown restrictions.

I believe the population of Wales should have a say on how the issue should be tackled.

Example

Full lockdown

Half lockdown

No lockdown & masks optional

It's affecting all people's lives so all the people should have their say.

Additional Information:

Everybody is realising that these numbers getting released are mostly incorrect and the government doesn't know how to tackle it themselves.

There are a lot more people getting affected by the virus without even coming in to contact with it.

There are people suffering with their business closing and suffering with the bills etc. There are people being affected, even dying, by not being able to be diagnosed or even have their treatment. There are also the mental health issues with people not being able to socialise and catch up with they loved ones and friends if they choose to.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

Let Welsh citizens vote on lockdown restrictions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
Petitions Committee | 16 July 2021

Reference: SR210189-12

Petition Number: P-06-1169

Petition title: Let Welsh citizens vote on lockdown restrictions.

Text of petition:

I believe the population of Wales should have a say on how the issue should be tackled.

Example

Full lockdown

Half lockdown

No lockdown & masks optional

It's affecting all people's lives so all the people should have their say.

1. Background: The restrictions

Since March 2020, the Welsh Government has imposed restrictions on life in Wales to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, by making health protection regulations under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.



The current regulations set out the rules at the four levels set out in the [Welsh Government Coronavirus Control Plan](#), from a requirement to stay at home at Level 4 to restrictions on gatherings and events at Level 1. They also set rules that apply at all alert levels, including requiring people to wear face coverings in certain situations and places.

The regulations have been frequently amended to reflect changes in the development of the pandemic.

2. Approving the restrictions

The Welsh Government makes the health protection regulations under the Act using the urgency procedure set out in [Section 45R](#). This procedure enables regulations to be made without a draft being laid before and approved by the Senedd, if the person making the regulations makes a declaration that they are ‘of the opinion that, by reason of urgency, it is necessary’ to do this.

Such regulations must be approved by the Senedd within 28 days. This can be extended for periods of dissolution or recess for more than four days. If the regulations are not approved within that time, they cease to have effect. This is known as the made affirmative procedure.

After the regulations are made, they are laid before the Senedd. A Senedd Committee considers and reports on the regulations, drawing attention to issues of legal, political or public policy significance. Members of the Senedd then vote on the regulations, using the affirmative procedure set out in [Standing Orders](#). Committee reports and records of votes on the regulations during the [Fifth Senedd](#) and [Sixth Senedd](#) are published online. The Senedd has not voted to reject any health protection regulations during the pandemic.

Some parliamentarians have raised concerns about the use of the urgency procedure to impose lockdown restrictions. In a meeting of the Senedd Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee on 8 June 2020, [Suzy Davies MS asked then Health Minister Vaughan Gething MS](#) for made-affirmative regulations to be brought to the attention of the Senedd more quickly after they were made, or for the draft affirmative procedure to be used instead. The draft affirmative procedure would allow Members to vote on the regulations before they came into effect. The Health Minister said:

The Government is making use of the legitimate ways to introduce regulations in the extraordinary times that we live in and the made affirmative process is there for exactly circumstances like these, where extraordinary steps need to be taken at a level and a speed that makes sense for the public that we serve, and that's the way the Government will continue to exercise our responsibilities with and for the people of Wales.

At Westminster, the House of Lords Constitution Committee has argued that the UK Government's use of the same urgency procedure in the Act to make lockdown regulations for England 'restricted the Government's accountability to Parliament' and 'significantly constrained parliamentary scrutiny'. It said that the UK Government should hold a parliamentary debate and vote on the regulations before they came into force wherever possible.

3. Holding a public vote on the restrictions

Section 64 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 provides that the Welsh Government may hold a poll across all, or any parts of, Wales for the purpose of ascertaining the views of those polled about whether or how any of the functions of the Welsh Ministers should be exercised.

Using this power, a poll could be held to ascertain people's views on how the Welsh Ministers should move forward with the lockdown restrictions.

Such a poll would allow the people of Wales to have their say on what they consider to be the best way to handle the pandemic going forward.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.13

P-06-1170 An immediate independent review of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 selection process in the WPWL

This petition was submitted Mali Beatrice Summers, having collected a total of 2,526 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Abergavenny WFC, Briton Ferry Llansawel Ladies and Cascade YC Ladies have been forcibly relegated from the Welsh Premier Women's League, the top women's league in Wales, despite all finishing above the relegation zone. We are calling for a fully independent review of the FAW selection process for the new Tier 1 and Tier 2 leagues to ensure transparency, equality and fairness. Promotion or relegation should be decided on the pitch, and not be driven by money or the size of your men's team.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **FAW restructure of the Welsh Women's Premier League**

DATE **02 July 2021**

BY **Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip**

I have now had a constructive and useful meeting with representatives of the Football Association of Wales, to discuss its proposed restructure of the Welsh Women's Premier League. The restructure is a matter for the FAW, not government, but it has been raised on the floor of the Senedd so I felt it important to speak directly with the FAW, to better understand its plans and the impact any decisions will have on our ambition to ensure more inclusive access to sport in Wales.

Of course, I fully support the FAW's ambition and focus on developing and improving the women's game in Wales. However, as the FAW acknowledged in our meeting, the way proposed changes to the structure of the women's domestic game have been communicated, particularly to the players affected, has clearly been inadequate. The FAW recognises that it needs to urgently change the way it communicates with clubs and players, and also improve its communication with Members of the Senedd and the Welsh Government.

The FAW has given me a commitment that it will do everything it can to support the clubs and players affected by the changes, and to engage more closely and proactively with Members of the Senedd and the Welsh Government in future. I look forward to the FAW delivering on that commitment.

P-06-1170 An immediate independent review of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 selection process in the WPWL, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 04.07.21

Firstly, I do appreciate the Welsh Government having a meeting with the FAW to discuss matters. Myself, and all clubs involved, thank you. We share in the vision of developing and improving Women's football in Wales. Our players and volunteers have been doing this for nearly a decade or more in some cases. However, I do have some concerns and points to highlight to you.

The FAW receives public money from the Welsh Government. Therefore I would argue that this restructure is a matter for the government. I would also argue that the FAW, because they receive public money, should adhere to the Freedom of Information Act and share their scoring with clubs and the wider public. At the moment, they have refused to do so. If the FAW are not adhering to the law, surely this is a matter for the Welsh Government also? If the FAW are allowed to act unaccountable to anyone but themselves, surely corruption and cover ups could happen. The people who run the clubs that have been directly affected are all volunteers, who all give back to their communities, and surely they should be represented and protected by the Welsh Government.

This letter fails to address what the petition is asking for: an independent review into the whole process. We have grave concerns. The panel who made the decision were all FAW staff members who claim know the women's game in Wales, however none of these members ever come to watch any of our games. None of these people have ever spoken to any of the volunteers who run the clubs. Furthermore, [REDACTED], who is the head of women's football in Wales organised the restructure and sat at the head of the selection committee. Clubs were worried to raise concerns and approach [REDACTED] with problems or concerns as this could have been a black mark against us moving forward. If the panel was independent surely this problem would have been eradicated. This process was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic which I think was unreasonable, and also that the process placed more emphasis on media than competitiveness in the league.

There was a conflict of interest during the selection process. The CEO of TNS, [REDACTED], is very high up in the FAW and all those involved in the panel work under him. TNS did not have a women's side. Their previous women's side left the club because they were treated so poorly, they joined Wem Town Ladies. If you approached them they could give you evidence about this also. TNS, despite not having a women's side, were granted a place. With [REDACTED] son now head coach of the set up. Without transparency, this looks like corrupt decision. Especially, as Abergavenny WFC, the club I play for, have been in the top league for nearly ten years, never relegated, and are statistically the fourth best women's side in Wales – but we were chosen to be demoted.

If the FAW are committed to supporting clubs I would like to request that they meet Abergavenny WFC, Britton Ferry and Cascade together in person and create an open discussion. I would also suggest that the FAW get in contact with a development plan for us. We would also like written confirmation that if we win Tier 2 we will be automatically promoted back into Tier 1. [REDACTED] has said previously that the 'criteria can change at

any time.' We are concerned [REDACTED] will change the criteria and not give us enough time to achieve it. We would like the criteria for Tier 1 now, along with targets, so we can work towards them over the next year. Until this is written in writing by the FAW, these assurances and promises mean nothing.

We once again urge the Welsh Government to proceed with a truly independent review into this whole process. We also request that they instruct the FAW to be transparent and publish the scoring and process completely for clubs and the public to see. We would also like the FAW to actively communicate with the clubs affected with a development plan, and we would like written assurance that if we win Tier 2 that we would be promoted back into Tier 1. We would also like the criteria for next season to be published in advance so we can work towards that.

Agenda Item 4.1

P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled

This petition was submitted by Tracy Locke having collected a total of 121 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the Welsh Government to ensure that it is a legal requirement for all GP surgeries to have wide, adjustable treatment beds and hoists available for the use of disabled patients, so that they can be examined whenever there is need.

I was born with Spinabifida in 1970 and as a survivor of this condition I am paralysed from above the waist down and use a wheelchair full time. In 2017 I was diagnosed with stage 4 bladder cancer. It cannot be legally proven but it is my sincere belief that had I been examined earlier in the years before in my GP surgery on an a wide, adjustable treatment bed, perhaps with the aid of a hoist, then my cancer would not have been diagnosed at such an advanced stage. Since I've been looking into this issue, many disabled women have spoken to me about how they do not have equal access to smear tests because of this issue too. Often people think that disabled access is just about lifts and ramps but in health care, it is so much more complex. Let's join together to make access to health care equal for all people.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/10107/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

22 March 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2020 on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition No. P-05-914 Equal access to healthcare for the disabled. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The position on this has not changed since my previous letter to you in May 2020 (ref: VG/01865/20). Guidance recommends a treatment room with a combined Changing Places Toilet and the facility to treat bariatric patients. The reason for the combined room is to maximize room utilisation. The design guidance sets out room requirements and sets out the best practice requirements.

Legislation to increase the provision of Changing Places Toilets is being considered by the Minister for Housing and Local Government. NHS facilities will need to consider compliance with any requirements that are introduced. As stated, this would be the best way to cover the requirements.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



**GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES**

**Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe**
**Swansea Bay University
Health Board**

Cadeirydd/Chair: Emma Woollett
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: Mark Hackett

gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser
carling for each other, working together, always improving

Pencadlys Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe
Un Porthfa Talbot, Parc Ynni, Baglan, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR Ffôn 01639 862000

Swansea Bay University Health Board Headquarters
One Talbot Gateway, Baglan Energy Park, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR Phone 01639 862000

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Dyddiad / Date: 7th April 2021

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: SM/ID 18086

Your Ref: Petition P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled

Janet Finch-Saunders
Chair, Welsh Parliament Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

Thank you for your correspondence requesting a response to the above petition.

Our Primary Community and Therapies Services Group Estates Department do not believe that any of the 49 general medical practices (GMPs) within the Swansea Bay University Health Board have a hoist. However, we are currently confirming this position, with Practices requested to provide this information to the Health Board. Final responses will be collated and provided to you by the end of April 2021.

To date 61% of GMPs in SBUHB have confirmed that they have adjustable treatment couches for use by disabled patients. Whilst the majority of sites have adjustable couches they are not the wider bariatric type referred to in your letter, only 3 practices which have responded to date have confirmed they have the bariatric specification.

From a clinical perspective, if a patient cannot adequately be assessed using the equipment available, then General Medical Practitioners would refer the patient to an alternative, appropriate service for advice or assessment as clinically indicated.

I sincerely hope that my letter addresses the issues raised and provides clarity on the current provision.



Yours sincerely



MARK HACKETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE —





GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Cadeirydd/Chair: Emma Woollett
Prif Welthredwr/Chief Executive: Mark Hackett

gofalu am ein gilydd, cydweithio, gwella bob amser
caring for each other, working together, always improving

Pencadlys Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe
Un Porthfa Talbot, Parc Ynni, Baglan, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR Ffôn 01639 862000

Swansea Bay University Health Board Headquarters
One Talbot Gateway, Baglan Energy Park, Port Talbot, SA12 7BR Phone 01639 862000

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg ac yn y Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Dyddiad / Date: 11 May 2021

Janet Finch-Saunders
Chair, Welsh Parliament Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 18086

Your Ref: Petition P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled

Response sent by e-mail to the clerking team at Petitions@Senedd.Wales as requested.

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

Further to my letter dated 7 April 2021, I can now confirm that the Primary Care Team has received responses from the forty-nine general medical practices (GPs) in Swansea Bay Health Board.

The data collected shows that 90% of GPs have an adjustable treatment bed that can be used by disabled patients. Twelve percent of practices confirm that this equipment is designed to accommodate bariatric patients. However, no GP practices have access to a hoist.

I would like to take this opportunity again to confirm that, from a clinical perspective, if a patient cannot adequately be assessed using the equipment available, then their medical practitioner has the ability to refer, either for advice or assessment as clinically indicated.

The Health Board will also consider providing adjustable treatment beds and hoists in practices at a cluster level either in the plans for new buildings or by future improvement grants at sites able to accommodate this equipment. I can confirm that we are already



looking to accommodate these facilities in new developments being taken forward in the Swansea Bay area.

I trust this provides a response to the questions raised.

Yours sincerely



MARK HACKETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



**P-05-914 Equal Access to Health Care for the Disabled, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 26.06.21**

I am heartened to see Swansea Bay's response to my petition. I have only ever asked that moving forward, hoists and wide adjustable treatment beds are available when someone living with severe mobility issues, needs assessment of their physical condition or treatment.

Obviously these facilities wouldn't need to be kept just for disabled people and can be used for everyone. It's just important that they are available when disabled people need them.

We know we are in the minority but things can go wrong very quickly for us, because we often can't feel when things are going wrong in our bodies, due to paralysis and this has been my experience.

Arguably it's more important for us to be assessed more thoroughly than physically-typical people, so the equipment for us needs to be on site where ever possible, for that to easily take place.

I hope that the other Health Boards across Wales will soon be as positive about this provision as Swansea Bay have been and that one day, the whole of the UK, can make these provisions available for severely disabled people.

Vaughan Gething has mentioned the baratric beds more than the hoists, but both are necessary. I need a wide treatment bed because I can't roll easily, not because I'm over-weight and most paralysed people like me, would need the width of treatment bed too, whether over weight or not. We can't flip over on a narrow bed, and it's dangerous for us to try. I have been refused treatment on a narrow bed as a result of this problem. Hoists help us to transfer safely, so are a crucial part of a safe examination.

I hope that the government continues to push for all GP surgeries to have access to at least one adjustable treatment bed and hoist. Lack of this provision in my local surgery has cost the NHS dearly as I ended up having 2 costly surgeries and am about to have another because my wounds have not healed in 4 years from that original cancer surgery. If I'd been adequately examined when I presented with continual urine infections four years ago. If the treatment bed there had been adjustable, if they'd have had a hoist, it would have saved the NHS thousands.

Please keep pushing for this, it will save lives and money.

Yours sincerely,

Agenda Item 4.2

P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK

This petition was submitted by David Bradley having collected a total of 561 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call upon the Senedd to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that funding is in place to enable limb amputees within Wales to have prosthetic technology at least equal to that which is available within the English and Scottish NHS.

We ask for the same level of support to be made available to people living in Wales. NHS Scotland has provided microprocessor prosthetics for several years and NHS England since 2016. The Welsh policy review is outstanding since 2017.

Additional Information

Petitioner's Story

As a fit nearly 60-year-old, whilst at work one Friday afternoon in March 2018 I suffered an aneurysm in my right leg. During the next 8 days I had three major operations during which a very professional team tried to save my leg, save it below the knee, and then above the knee. The last was successful and I am left with my leg removed just above the knee. Introduced to ALAC at Rookwood my journey back to work started. They designed and fitted a prosthetic limb and through regular physiotherapy I was walking and back in work late summer. Thank you, brilliant service.

For several years there has been a significant discrepancy with the type of prosthetics available to disabled people of Wales.

As I will have to spend the rest of my life using a prosthetic leg I would like to be given, and I would like all amputees in Wales to be given, the same opportunity as residents of the rest of the UK.

Do not discriminate. Equal the standard for Welsh disabled residents.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-974
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/09641/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

Dear Janet,

29 March 2021

I write further to my response to your letter of 8 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding funding provision for microprocessor prosthetic knees.

I am delighted to confirm that I have recently announced a new £700k fund providing specialist Microprocessor Controlled Prosthetic Knees (MPK) to eligible patients in Wales:

<https://gov.wales/new-fund-provide-microprocessor-controlled-prosthetic-knees>

The fund will be available from 1 April to those eligible via the NHS Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation services, which are delivered in-house by three specialist Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres (ALACs) located in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham. Those eligible can discuss this at their next assessment with their prosthetists.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Back Page 122
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.06.21

Petition - Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK.

Response following reply from Welsh Minister dated 29 March 2021 – ref VG/09641/20

What are your thoughts on the attached document? /Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

If the committee wished to have an example of the effective and important work that it undertakes look no further than the response from the Minister.

In one of the early meetings, it was recognised by one of the committee members that Wales does not lead in the support it provides for its disabled citizens - it often lags. This petition highlighted one discrepancy and resolution has now been achieved. Welsh provision for Microprocessor Controlled Prosthetic Knees is at minimum now equal to the rest of the UK.

In not accepting weak excuses and arguments and challenging ministerial responses we have now achieved a result that will make a substantial difference for the residents of Wales. From personal experience I can also state that the change will, as suggested in the petition, be at minimum cost-neutral to the Welsh NHS in the medium to long term. A great result for all.

Thank you to the committee for your hard work and support on behalf of all the signatories to the petition and on behalf of Welsh disabled residents. This success transforms lives.

Agenda Item 4.3

P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!

This petition was submitted by Laura Williams having collected a total of 5,159 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Since covid 19 and lockdown people have been stuck inside for months on end, many of these people were suffering before lockdown and during lockdown. I for one suffered myself because of lockdown, and I am concerned about the number of suicides in my area since before lockdown and during. Lockdown has made people's mental health worse and has put mental health services under severe pressure, young children are suffering adults and the elderly are suffering due to lockdown.

Our Welsh Parliament should be taking action on mental health and funding more services people are waiting a long time to be seen or given help. Many local doctors and nurses are not trained in mental health.

The percentage of people reporting mental health problems increased from 23.3% in 2017-2019 to 36.8% in April 2020 (UK Household Longitudinal Study). If this doesn't scream how lockdown is drastically changing the way we live our lives and fights the battles we have to fight on a daily basis, then I'm not sure what will?

Additional Information:

My name is Laura and I suffer with multiple mental health issues; those being ptsd, ocd, depression, anxiety and panic disorder. I created a petition which was also stating the fact that mental health is in dire straits and acquires extra support. The petition was successful and since my last petition I have decided that the best way to make a change was to start with myself. This pushed me to successfully complete my ptsd therapy.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Eluned Morgan AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg
Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1078
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00860/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet,

12 March 2021

Thank you for your letter of 27 November concerning petition P-05-1078 on funding for mental health services. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding. We have received an incredibly large volume of letters and emails and are trying to respond to all of them but this takes time.

Protecting Mental Health Services in 2021-22 remains one of our top priorities. Recognising the impact that the pandemic has had on many people's mental health and wellbeing, we have announced over £42m of additional funding to support Mental Health services in 21-22.

Please be assured that we are closely monitoring the impact of the pandemic on people's health and wellbeing and are working with partners to provide immediate additional support to respond to people's changing mental health needs. We recently re-issued our [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022](#) that was revised in light of the pandemic. This plan outlines our priority areas for action over this period and includes improving access and range of psychological therapies available.

We continue to work closely with health boards, the voluntary sector and other partners to understand the changing mental health needs as a result of the pandemic. Through this, we know that levels of anxiety have increased with the restrictions during the periods of lockdown and as a response to the wider impacts of the pandemic, for instance on employment and finances.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Responding to the wider socio-economic impact requires a cross-Government and multi-agency approach -this is not something that the NHS or even the health and social care sectors can do alone. Therefore, we are clear that action to support the nation's mental health through this period requires preventative, protective cross government action as well as ensuring we have appropriate mental health services in place to meet people's needs.

From a government perspective, we have responded to changing mental health needs through three clear work streams:

- Maintaining mental health services as 'essential' and responding to immediate mental health needs;
- Working across Welsh Government to reduce the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on mental health and well-being and strengthening protective actions; and,
- Supporting health boards to meet the changing health needs through the pandemic and in the longer-term recovery of mental health services.

We have further invested nearly £10 million for mental health services this year. This in addition to the £7million planned investment for mental health service improvements made at the beginning of the year.

This £10m investment includes an additional £2.7m to provide immediate access to a range of low level mental health support in response to the higher levels of anxiety. With the Minister for Education, we have also provided a further £5m to the support the Whole School Approach so that we can support our children and young people through this period.

The planned £7million mental health service improvement funding was released in two phases (£3.5m each) – phase one to provide immediate support to enable services to respond to needs during the pandemic; and phase two, to support the priority areas in the [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022](#). The delivery plan outlines a number of priority areas that we will focus on, include improving crisis response and developing the workforce that you reference within your letter. This plan has recently been re-issued to reflect those actions that have needed to be accelerated due to the pandemic and to set out new actions to respond to the wider socio-economic impacts.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg
Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language

P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 24.06.21

My comments on this matter still remain the same,

My last petition there was a lot of talk about funding going into mental health services and improving these services, I am yet to see an improvement into mental health services and the waiting time decreased, as you are aware suicides are still on the increase and this is because people are waiting too long or asking for help and being either referred to a different service or on a waiting list.

Their needs to be an overall improvement in all sectors of mental health, further training in areas such as A&E when I went to A&E and I presented with mental health issues I was simply told “we don’t have anyone here to deal with mental health” this is a very worrying thing especially to people who have come to seek medical help, I feel A&E doctors and nurses should be trained and should know

The warning signs of someone who is mentally suffering and I feel there should be an in team of mental health within A&E and not waiting for mental health nurses or doctors from outside the hospital.

As of recently my anxiety has been very bad I was discharged from my local mental health team and referred to primary mental health, when I had an assessment with primary mental health I was told that depression and anxiety and my other complex needs need to be dealt with by my local mental health team so I re-referred myself just to have it declined. I also went to my doctors who said that they are seeing an increase in mental health teams in her words “passing the buck” to other mental health teams who can’t deal with some complex needs which is wasting time and resources I have again referred myself back to my mental health team just to be again declined and given leaflets this is where people are being let down past from pillar to post and feeling like no one is listening it’s very poor handling and communication especially if someone is suffering.

Mental health services are struggling and especially with a pandemic doctors are still not seeing patients even if they are ill health or ill mentally which is effecting people by not being able to see their doctors face to face and it’s causing them worry and anxiety, I have tried to see my doctors on a number of times for my mental health but was told “ unless I’m an emergency no face to face” this is having a huge impact and when people are asking for help only having advice over the phone.

The Welsh government needs to engage more with mental health services and listen to doctors and nurses and see where they also think should be an improvement in what sector of mental health. We need a better organised and well funded mental health sector and we also need it to be able to deal with our increasing population in the future we also need a good working and communication within mental health sectors, our future generation might need these services in the future and this is why we need to see an improvement I am still hearing a lot of stories about people suffering, being let down or simply not getting enough help. I find there is not enough up and running mental health services in each area of communities and where a few communities have to share one mental health building which puts pressure on the staff within the mental health team, more buildings need to be made available in other communities where there is more
Easy accessible for them.

I’m not happy about leaflets being given out to people and told to research how to deal with depression and anxiety this is not

Beneficial to all people but might benefit certain individuals, we need more hands on help and engaging with patients and to establish the plan going forward.

I am yet to see money being put into services and services improving and coping with waiting times and assessments, because of this pandemic most assessments are done over phone or video, again this is not always helpful for certain people who maybe deal with complex mental health needs, more face to face appointments need to become available.

I am saddened that even though I have been referred to MIND which I know have an increasing waiting list that I am still being thrown pillar to post within the mental health side of things and no communication this causes certain individuals like myself to become lost in the system.

I will keep fighting and I will keep pushing for better mental health services for our future generation and the current generation our elderly and our children I feel very passionate about mental health and how going forward their needs to be a massive change to our services.

More awareness needs to be made of mental health.

I hope my comments can be of help and I hope moving forward their can be some positive outcomes to come of this petition.

Thank you.

Agenda Item 4.4

P-05-1147 Require all schools to provide daily live / recorded teaching to all pupils not returning to school

This petition was submitted by Catherine Evans, having collected a total of 308 signatures.

Text of Petition:

There are still schools claiming there are insurmountable barriers to providing lessons, five weeks into the term and for seven weeks of this academic year. This is no longer acceptable. Our children must all be given equal access to education. Solutions to those barriers must be found and all pupils must be taught.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1147
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/02173/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Welsh parliament
Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

9 April 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee, seeking views on the issues raised in Petition P-05-1147 requesting consideration of the options available for parents to raise future concerns regarding live lessons with local authorities.

Let me assure you that I am aware of the significant impact that missing school can have on the development, mental health and wellbeing of our young people. That is why on 31 March, as part of the [latest 21-day review](#), the First Minister again set out the priority placed on ensuring all children and students in Wales will return to face-to-face education on Monday 12 April.

Additional mitigating measures are in place to make the school environment safe for a return to face-to-face learning and we have updated our [guidance](#), having taken into account the anxieties of learners, schools staff and others who may be exposed to the virus in the classroom or workplace, and schools have some flexibility in terms of how they choose to implement these. With these additional measures in place, there should no longer be a requirement for cohorts of learners to be required to learn from home.

The responsibility for the schools including the measures that they put in place during school closures, such as the provision of live lesson rests with local authorities. I would therefore continue to urge any parent or learner that has any issues with the learning that is being provided to contact their local authority directly to discuss these issues; they are best placed to provide the rationale for the decisions taken locally.

Yours sincerely

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

P-05-1147 Require all schools to provide daily live / recorded teaching to all pupils not returning to school, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 24.06.21

Many thanks for pursuing this petition on my behalf.

Kirsty Williams will be aware from my direct correspondence with her that I have contacted my children's school, its governing body and Powys County Council. This did not result in the school providing any live or recorded lessons. The petition was a last resort as I feel I have no voice.

It is not satisfactory to leave this decision to schools if headteachers refuse to find solutions - in our case a local cluster of heads had decided in September 2020 that they would not be making live online provision in the event of the winter lockdown. They could have used all the extra planning time to work collegiately to deliver live or recorded lessons.

I am keen to know the current minister's views on the inequality experienced by some pupils (14% of Powys learners, based on PCC research). Should schools have to close in the autumn, will there be an entitlement to daily live or recorded teaching? Or will children attending schools that decline to teach be disadvantaged further?

Agenda Item 4.5

P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry

This petition was submitted by Peter Phillips having collected a total of 189 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The Welsh Government have given no indication as to when live music will be allowed to commence post lockdown. Accordingly, anybody working in the live music industry in Wales is unable to earn a living. The national Self-Employment Income Scheme ends on 17 August. After that date, should the Welsh Government continue to prohibit live music, they should be compelled to provide direct financial support to self-employed individuals in Wales who make their living in that industry.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Cultural Recovery Fund 2021-22**

DATE **22 March 2021**

BY **Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism**

The Welsh Government is today launching a further phase of the Cultural Recovery Fund, with up to £30m for the first six months of 2021-22 to help support Wales' diverse culture sector through the ongoing pandemic. It will also help those parts of the sector as we begin to relax restrictions over the coming months as we continue to work with the sector to recover.

We have listened and worked with the sectors to put this additional package of support in place. We recognise the unprecedented challenges the pandemic is having on the cultural fabric of Welsh life and we applaud the resilience and creativity on show.

The fund will be delivered jointly by the Welsh Government, the Arts Council of Wales and local authorities.

The Cultural Recovery Fund, announced last summer, provided £63.3m in 2020-21 to support theatres, music venues, heritage sites, events, museums, libraries, galleries, independent cinemas and freelancers.

It was made up of three main elements – the Arts Council for Wales administered funding of £18m to support 170 organisations, supporting national and local theatres and art galleries. More than 1,000 jobs have been supported.

The Welsh Government-administered element of the fund provided £27m to support the culture, creative, events and heritage sectors. More than 500 organisations received funding.

The Freelancers Fund was the first of its kind in the UK and has provided a total of £18m of grant support to 3,500 freelancers who have been unable to work during the pandemic and will be vital to the Wales' cultural recovery.

An eligibility checker will be live from midday Wednesday 24 March 2021.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1013
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/00847/21

Clerk of the Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
Petitions@Senedd.Wales

19 April 2021

Dear Petitions Committee Clerk,

I write to you following a letter from Janet Finch-Saunders MS on 30 March regarding a petition relating to financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry (P-05-1013), which shared correspondence from the petitioner Peter Phillips, dated 5 March.

I note the continued concerns of the petitioner who feels the issues he has raised previously have yet to be adequately addressed, specifically concerns that Welsh Government support to date has failed to support some freelance Musicians still in need of assistance, and issues relating to the eligibility criteria, application process and communications for the Freelancer Fund.

As outlined in previous correspondence, when designing the Freelancer Fund difficult decisions were taken in light of the limited resources available. These decisions were taken in partnership with local authorities, the creative and cultural unions, and with the freelance community through the Wales Freelance Taskforce. It was agreed that the Fund should be focused on a small number of priority sectors aligned to the objectives of the Cultural Recovery Fund to support the sustainability of cultural and creative sectors in Wales significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Fund was delivered on a first-come-first-served basis rather than as a competitive Fund based on level of need in response to concerns raised by stakeholders associated with difficulties of freelancers providing evidence of loss of earnings. We delivered the fund in separate phases at the request of stakeholders, to help to mitigate any accessibility issues associated with the first-come-first-served approach and to give more time for applicants to prepare. Following feedback from phase one, we strengthened our communications for subsequent phases.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We are aware that at this difficult time there are many more freelancers and sectors that are still in need of support. Recognising that only the UK Government has the fiscal firepower to deliver protection which supports all individuals we continue to press the UK Government to be responsive and responsible in terms of supporting those who are still falling through the gaps.

The Freelancer Fund as the first of its kind in the UK, has benefitted a significant number of creative and cultural freelancers in Wales, and has supported 3,584 individuals with £18m in funding to date. On 22 March, I announced that the Welsh Government was launching a further phase of the Cultural Recovery Fund, with up to £30m for the first six months of 2021-22 to help support Wales' diverse culture sector through the ongoing pandemic. This includes a further allocation to the Freelancer Fund which will open for applications in early May. My officials are currently gathering feedback from our stakeholders, including freelancers and the creative unions, to identify lessons learned to shape this fourth round of financial support for freelancers so that it meet the needs of the sector. This includes a review of the eligibility criteria and exploring a scheme which does not follow a first-come-first-served approach. In addition we are undertaking an analysis of the freelancers supported to date and these findings will also be used to inform the design of future support. I am aware that the petitioner previously enquired to the Petitions Committee regarding the eligibility of tribute artists, wedding singers and pub singers to the Freelancer Fund. An eligibility checker will be available on the Business Wales website in early May, and I would advise that individuals wishing to access funding complete the eligibility checker as soon as it is available, as there will be a number of considerations which determine eligibility.

The Welsh Government recognises the ongoing challenges being faced by parts of the cultural and creative industries that are still unable to work due to the restrictions in place to limit the spread of the virus and protect public health. We note the particular impact this is having on freelancers operating in sectors such as the live music sector who are unable to work and generate an income. The Creative Wales business plan for 2021/22 includes action to provide continued support to the music sector as a priority sector during this difficult period. This includes the development of an industry led action plan for the commercial music industry in Wales that will reflect the need for both short term actions to assist the sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and longer term plans for developing the sector for a sustainable future in a global market. The plan also prioritises the provision of clear and up to date guidance supporting a safe return to activity. This will adopt a phased approach, working with our stakeholders as public health conditions allow to move through the levels of the Control Plan. This approach enables us to respond to any rises in transmission of Coronavirus and take action when there is certainty that the public health conditions allow for venues, events and live performances to recommence. The Test Event Programme is a crucial element of this, and the Welsh Government will look to how these are being undertaken across the UK, and take learnings where appropriate.

I understand that the petition will be considered further by the successor committee, once it has been established following the Senedd Election.

Yours sincerely,



Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.07.21

Dear Committee

As the former Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism acknowledges in his letter of 19 April, the purpose of my Petition was to raise a concern for a particular sector of the live music industry, namely tribute artists, wedding and pub singers.

Since the onset of the pandemic these performers have been deprived of the ability to earn a living due to the restrictions on live music. The Freelancer Fund has not provided adequate support for these people. It has simply not been fit for purpose, both on a macro level by being constantly inadequate to support the total amount of applications and specifically for the sector this Petition applies to by virtue of the underwriting criteria that requires applicants to demonstrate they provide cultural benefit.

In addition, the Welsh Government's Covid health policy, when compared to England, has discriminated against the pub music sector and continues to do so. Yet, as the former Deputy Minister concedes, the Welsh Government does not have the fiscal power to provide the necessary support to this sector of the music industry. This continues to be the case.

There is probably nothing that can be done at this stage to compensate these individuals for failing them financially but I would urge the new administration to consider separate 'bounceback' support for this sector as a matter of urgency.

Yours Faithfully

Agenda Item 4.6

P-05-1092 Do not delay the May 2021 elections

This petition was submitted by David Hopkins having collected a total of 470 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The right to vote for democracy should not and cannot be removed by those in power as it undermines democracy. The current government must not be allowed to extend out their government as a result of Covid. All other countries have managed to hold elections.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Islwyn
- South Wales East



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru

Petitions@senedd.wales

11 March 2021

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your to your letter of 16 February about the circumstances in which a postponement of the Senedd election may become necessary.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government published a Written Statement on 5 March setting out the criteria, which will be used to determine whether the postponement of the election is necessary. The criteria set out the broad principles, which will be used to inform balanced judgements and are designed to allow for the flexibility needed in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Written Statement is available at: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-criteria-be-used-first-minister-determining-whether-it-necessary-or-appropriate>

The Welsh Government remains committed to the election proceeding on 6 May and we are supporting Returning Officers and electoral administrators to take action to mitigate risks associated with running the election during the pandemic.

Best wishes

MARK DRAKEFORD

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 4.7

P-05-1150 Provide business rates holiday to holiday home sites in wales, the same as England

This petition was submitted by Denise Evans, having collected a total of 640 signatures.

Text of Petition:

In March 2020 the UK Government announced a rates holiday for hospitality and leisure industry. alongside Scotland, the welsh government then set up rates relief for businesses under the rateable value of 500k. Quite a few holiday sites were excluded from the rates holiday, due to their rateable value over 500k. The majority of these sites split the rates bill between its caravan owners, which we would not be able to benefit from the relief at this troubling time and are desperately in need of it. we all respect the Welsh government choice to close borders and restrict the amount of transmission. But in return we would like to request the help of the welsh government by applying the no cap rate limit to the rates, to assist holiday home owners, due to not being able to access it. so we get the same rules that England have applied.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Clwyd West
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-1150

Ein cyf/Our ref: RE/00222/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

9 April 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-05-1150 which proposes the Welsh Government provides non-domestic rates relief to holiday home sites in Wales with a rateable value over £500,000.

On the 3rd March 2021, the Welsh Government announced the decision to extend the 100% non-domestic rates relief scheme specifically for ratepayers in the hospitality, leisure and tourism sectors with a rateable value over £500,000 in 2021-22.

Full guidance on the scheme can be found at: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/non-domestic-rates-enhanced-hospitality-and-leisure-rates-relief-scheme-2021-22>

The Welsh Government recognises the prolonged impact restrictions may have on businesses and is committed to supporting them through recovery.

Our £380m package provides eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses and charities in Wales with a straightforward year-long non-domestic rates holiday. In combination with our permanent relief schemes, the Welsh Government will be providing over £610m in non-domestic rates relief in 2021-22 meaning 70,000 businesses will continue to pay no rates at all. The estimated £380m cost goes beyond the £358.9m consequential received from the UK Government.

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Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The scheme has been specifically designed to support businesses in these sectors during these challenging times. It will be administered by local authorities and operate on an application basis. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have been materially negatively impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

My officials have had ongoing discussions with the Welsh Local Government Association about the implementation of this support. Local authorities will communicate with relevant businesses to discuss their application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd

Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

Agenda Item 4.8

P-05-1151 Provide a date for the return of Organised Children's Activities for Babies & Toddlers

This petition was submitted by Kate Worgan, Tots Play Cardiff North, having collected a total of 1,756 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Between September and December 2020, we were able to bring face to face classes back to indoor settings, fully following Welsh Government Legislation.

We had no outbreaks at classes and were extremely diligent and proactive about providing a safe environment for classes, whilst also providing all the benefits that classes can bring to Parents & Carers and their young children.

We are still running online classes but we need a date to be able to bring face to face classes back.

Additional Information:

Young children have often been overlooked in this pandemic, as have their parents.

We have been massively concerned about Parents being isolated and the effect on their mental health during the last year.

With families living further apart, a vital part of building their support network is to be able to meet other parents with young children, in a safe and welcoming environment.

There has been a chance to do this at online Baby classes, but trying to connect with people you haven't met yet can be hard.

Young children who don't attend private nursery have missed out on the opportunity and all the benefits of socialising with babies and children, a massive part of their development.

They have also missed out on the chance to explore and to benefit from developmental activities, plus activities which boost bonding between parent and child.

Parents really need us to be able to bring back safely our classes.

We also, as a sector, need this for our businesses to remain viable.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Julie Morgan
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05- 1151
Ein cyf/Our ref JM/00454/21

Clerk,
Petitions Committee

Dear Clerk,

6 May 2021

I am writing in response to your letter of 29 March regarding the petition on providing a date for the return of Organised Children's Activities for Babies and Toddlers.

The petition calls on the Welsh Government to provide a date for the return of face to face classes for parents and carers and their young children.

Organised Children's Activities, including baby and toddler groups, have been permitted outdoors since 27 March. On 23 April it was announced that they can take place indoors as of Monday 3 May 2021. Further information can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Yours sincerely,

Julie Morgan
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Back Page 148
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-05-1151 Provide a date for the return of Organised Children's Activities for Babies & Toddlers, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 01.07.21

Thank you very much for that! Is it possible to close the petition please? We were able to reopen indoor Baby & Toddler Classes a little while ago!

Thank you very much for all your help
Kind regards

Agenda Item 4.9

P-05-1154 Re-open the Welsh hospitality sector by 12 April 2021

This petition was submitted by Lyndsey Groundwell, having collected a total of 157 signatures.

Text of Petition:

With proposed easing for Welsh holidays and the UK government's exit strategy, we believe it is now time for the permanent re-opening of this economically and socially invaluable sector.

- NHS alert level has been dropped due to lesser threat
- Wales has administered highest percentage of vaccine first doses
- Lowest cases per 100,000 among UK nations at 75.4 per 100,000 – comparable to rates seen in September – plus other currently satisfied criteria means Wales now falls into alert level 2.

Additional Information:

Many Welsh pubs are the hub of the community providing a place where people can drop in and talk to other members of their local community which helps them feel less isolated. This benefit to people is specifically found in “the local” and often overlooked

Hospitality includes pubs, restaurants and cafes which attract members from every section of society and provides an invaluable source of income to its wider supply chain. Giving a date of 12 April will allow time for these vital companies to procure and manufacture the supplies that will be needed for the re-opening of venues

Last year, Wales re-opened after England which saw Welsh revenue go over the border

So far, hospitality will have been closed for two Easters, 2 Bank Holidays, Halloween, Bonfire Night, Christmas and New Year, St Dwynwen's, Valentine's, 6 Nations and also St Patrick's and St David's Day.

Many businesses will not survive unless the re-opening of hospitality is expedited

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1154
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01959/21

Clerk
Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament

Petitions@Senedd.Wales

13 April 2021

Dear Clerk

I refer to the letter of 29 March from the Chair of the now paused Committee regarding a petition from Lyndsey Groundwell Petition P-05-1154 Re-open the Welsh hospitality sector by 12 April.

The Welsh Government recognises the incredibly difficult and uncertain circumstances currently being experienced by businesses and individuals. We are absolutely committed to providing the support and assurance the business community needs.

As you will be aware, the Welsh Government updated its Coronavirus Control Plan on 19 March, setting out how and when more people and businesses will be able to resume their activities in the safest possible way.

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-control-plan-revised-alert-levels-wales-march-2021>

The plan supports the Welsh Government to continue to relax restrictions while the public health situation continues to remain positive – rates have fallen significantly across Wales thanks to all the hard work and sacrifices made by people during the winter months. It sets out a range of indicators the Welsh Government will analyse and assess, alongside professional expert advice and intelligence from local partners, to determine how restrictions are relaxed.

We will carefully review the regulations and we will continue our careful, step-by-step approach, lifting restrictions week by week, if the public health situation continues to remain favourable.

We have brought together a Tourism and Hospitality Stakeholder group which meets regularly and is co-chaired by the Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and the Welsh Language and also the Deputy Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Group includes representatives from the British Beer and Pubs Association, UK Hospitality Cymru and the Welsh Independent Restaurant Consortium so we are hearing direct from the sector across Wales.

Details of the latest relaxations to the regulations (including for the tourism, hospitality and leisure sector), subject to the public health situation remaining favourable, can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/covid-19-restriction-relaxations-wales-brought-forward>

In the meantime, our generous package of financial support for Welsh businesses will continue throughout April and into May. Many businesses will already have received their full share of the £180m funding announced in mid-March upfront to see them through until May, for others, including in the hospitality and tourism sector, cash grants will continue to be paid during April as applications are confirmed.

A pub, hotel or restaurant in Wales with ten staff would have been entitled to £45,000 in Welsh Government support to see them through from December onwards. This is on top of both our business rates relief scheme and UK Government support to cover staff costs.

A pub, hotel or restaurant with four staff would have been entitled to £27,000 in Welsh Government support to see them through from December onwards. This is on top of both our business rates relief scheme and UK Government support to cover staff costs.

The Welsh Government will also be providing over £610m in non-domestic rates relief in 2021-22. All retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with a rateable value of £500,000 or below will receive 100% non-domestic rates relief in 2021-22. This means that, in total, over 70,000 Welsh businesses will pay no rates at all for the year. Guidance on the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief scheme can be found at: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/non-domestic-rates-retail-leisure-and-hospitality-rates-relief-wales-2021-22>

We will continue to do all we can to support Welsh businesses through these incredibly difficult times and consider options beyond the current package of support.

Yours sincerely



Ken Skates AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales

Agenda Item 4.10

P-05-1156 Match the funding for small businesses during lockdown with England – including the restart grant

This petition was submitted by Sally Gillard, having collected a total of 2,458 signatures.

Text of Petition:

In Wales, small businesses have received the smallest level of funding of all UK nations during the third national lockdown – despite being locked down for longer.

As of today, Rishi Sunak also announced a restart grant for small businesses to help with re-opening of businesses.

I urge the welsh government to support our smallest businesses properly, and match the grants provided to small business owners in other uk nations.

Additional Information:

Rishi Sunak – budget March 2021

Comparison of funding of all UK nations for lockdown 3 is available by checking each nations funding on government websites.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1156
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01960/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

8 April 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 March regarding Petition P-05-1156 - Match the funding for small businesses during lockdown with England - including the restart grant.

The Welsh Government recognises the incredibly difficult and uncertain circumstances currently being experienced by businesses and individuals. We are absolutely committed to providing the support and assurance the business community needs.

Our generous package of financial support for Welsh businesses will continue throughout April and into May. Many businesses will already have received their full share of the £180m funding announced in mid-March upfront to see them through until May, for others, including in the hospitality and tourism sector, cash grants will continue to be paid during April as applications are confirmed. Businesses will therefore see no interruption in the flow of financial support, as we move cautiously to relax public health restrictions.

The Welsh Government has made unprecedented levels of funding available to support Welsh businesses during these incredibly challenging times, with a full 12 month rates holiday package for those in the hardest hit sectors that goes considerably beyond the relief available to businesses in England. To date we have provided more than two billion pounds in business support during the pandemic, safeguarding 165,000 Welsh jobs.

Another £200m in additional support for business has already been earmarked in the Final Budget 2021-22 – final decisions on this will be for the next administration following May's Senedd elections.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

A pub, hotel or restaurant in Wales with ten staff would have been entitled to £45,000 in Welsh Government support to see them through from December onwards. This is on top of both our and our business rates relief scheme and UK Government support to cover staff costs. A pub, hotel or restaurant with four staff would have been entitled to £27,000 in Welsh Government support – alongside the other support available.

You may also wish to note that on 23 February we also announced an additional £270m for the Development Bank of Wales' Flexible Investment Fund. This means more than £500m will be available through the fund up to 2030 to support the long term success and growth of our firms, in turn creating and protecting thousands of Welsh jobs.

<https://developmentbank.wales>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', written in a cursive style.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales

Agenda Item 4.11

P-05-1157 Allow schools to assess students how they see fit, including the use of open-book assessments

This petition was submitted by Ibrahim Sheikh, having collected a total of 2,312 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Recently, WJEC announced that my college will have to assess us using in-class assessments under exam conditions. This announcement was made 6 school weeks before teachers have to submit our grades, meaning we will only have a very small amount of time to prepare for exams. This is not fair to students who have been told conflicting information regarding how we will be graded all year. How schools assess students should be up to them, as they have all been affected differently by the pandemic.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



By email

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Welsh Parliament Petitions Committee

26 March 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to offer our views on the issues raised in the petition.

We have worked with the Design and Delivery Advisory Group (DDAG) set up by the Minister of Education to put in place the arrangements for the award of GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2021 and to deliver the policy position set out in the Minister's Direction to Qualifications Wales. We have provided guidance for centres on the different aspects of the alternative approach. The latest version of the guidance is available on our [website](#). The guidance also includes a timeline of key dates in the process, with provisional centre determined grades to be submitted to WJEC by 2 July 2021.

We have been aware of queries raised about the assessment evidence that can be used to inform grade judgements and have [written to centres](#) on 23 March 2021 to provide further clarity on the requirements. Our letter included the following clarification in support of our published guidance:

- Contributing assessment evidence could come from a range of activities that include mock exams, past papers provided by WJEC, NEA and other assessed work.
- Historic evidence of attainment can be used as part of the evidence considered when determining a grade, but with caution, as it may not be representative of the learner's current level of attainment.
- Centres can develop their own assessments ensuring that they are valid and fair.
- WJEC past papers should only be used where you are confident that they will provide an authentic assessment that demonstrates the learner's true level of attainment. WJEC past papers can be adjusted to provide a more authentic assessment.

Qualifications Wales

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Pack Page 158

www.qualificationswales.org

Cymwysterau Cymru

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Parc Imperial,
Casnewydd
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- Assessed work may need to be completed in the school environment or at home, but centres need to be assured that it is the learner's own work.

A key part of the approach to this summer is that learners should only be assessed on what schools and colleges have taught them. There is flexibility for schools to decide on the assessment approach that works best for their learners and a focus on the quality rather than quantity of evidence generated. If a centre chooses to use a WJEC past paper, they do not have to be completed in one session under examination conditions but can be divided into sections and schools and colleges can decide how and when to use them so that they integrate with their teaching plans. Centres may also provide learners with the topics on which they will be assessed in advance, however they should not provide them with the actual assessment in advance.

These clarifications are intended to reinforce the flexibility available to schools and colleges in the approach for this summer and particularly that a range of evidence can be used; we recognise that the approach has to be flexible for centres to accommodate their local context. These key messages have been reinforced through the recent publication of [8 key facts](#) for schools and colleges.

However, there must be a balance between flexibility and the integrity of results for learners this summer. An approach that does not rely on credible assessment evidence is likely to lead to inconsistency and unfairness for learners and could also put centres at risk of challenge from learners through the appeals process. The approach seeks to balance flexibility for schools and colleges with requirements to provide consistency across Wales. Ultimately, the exceptional arrangements put in place for this summer need a system-wide commitment to valid and credible outcomes that allow learners to have confidence in their results and progress onto their next stages.

We continue to work closely with WJEC and the Design and Delivery Advisory Group to finalise the arrangements for summer 2021 and to respond to concerns raised by learners, schools and colleges.

Please let me know if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker
Chief Executive



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1157
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/02139/21
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet,

13 April 2021

Thank you for your email dated 25 March regarding the Petition P-05-1157, Allow schools to assess students how they see fit, including the use of open book assessments from Ibrahim Sheikh. I also note that you have written to Qualification Wales and WJEC.

I recognise that this is an extremely stressful time for students, teachers and parents alike. I know that for many young people, particularly those in exam years, the current situation is both difficult and challenging. I would like to assure you, and the petitioner, that in developing alternative assessment arrangements for qualifications, learner well-being and progression has been at the heart of our decision making.

The Centre Determined Grade model has been developed in close collaboration through the Design and Delivery Advisory Group of head teachers and college leaders supported by expert advice from Qualification Wales and WJEC. This has been an iterative process, reflecting both the changing course of the pandemic and a shifting policy landscape, but significant emphasis has been placed on making information available to learners, schools and colleges at the earliest opportunity in order to support them in making their preparations.

In this context, on 23 March, Qualifications Wales published the final, updated version of their [guidance](#) for centres, providing further detail on the types of evidence they may wish to draw on in determining grades using the Centre-Determined Grade model for the award of GCSE, AS and levels in 2021. This guidance sets a framework within which schools and colleges can operate, to ensure a consistent and transparent approach is taken. This approach is further underpinned by WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks which support each qualification.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

A key aspect that schools and colleges will be expected to decide is the assessment evidence that they will use in order to determine grades. It is important to stress that this can include a broad range of material including mock exams, adapted past papers, non-examination assessments or assessment materials that a school or college has developed itself, to provide a holistic range of evidence on which to determine a learner's grade. Whilst assessment evidence must come from work completed by the learner, on adapted specification content (i.e. less the assessment content WJEC removed at the start of the academic year in light of the disruption to teaching and learning), during the course of study for the qualification, there are also clear expectations learners are only assessed on content they have had the opportunity to cover.

The number of pieces and type of evidence required to support judgements are not prescribed, since this will vary by qualification and how key themes and skills are organised in assessments. Prescription would also not provide the flexibility required to allow for variation in context between centres.

Schools and colleges will also be expected to have processes in place to make sure their judgements to determine grades are as fair and objective as possible and there will be guidance and training available to support them with this. There will also be internal quality assurance processes in place to ensure grade decisions are consistent and WJEC will provide external quality assurance to check the processes that schools and colleges are using are appropriate.

The guidance is intended to support centres develop a sound rationale and evidence base for the award of Centre Determined Grades, so that they can be sure that they have determined the correct grade for a learner and can justify the grade awarded should there be a request for a review of the grade or an appeal.

Further information on the Centre-Determined Grade model and what it means for teachers and learners is available on the [Qualifications Wales](#) and [WJEC](#) websites including the following [mythbuster](#), which is a useful resource that the petitioner may be interested in reading..

I hope this provides some assurance about the arrangements that are being made.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

P-05-1157 Allow schools to assess students how they see fit, including the use of open-book assessments, Correspondence – WJEC to Committee, 20.05.21

Schools and colleges can choose evidence from a broad range of sources including adapted past papers, non-examination assessment, centre- devised tasks, and coursework to inform their professional judgement

Schools and colleges will be using their professional judgement in assessing learners based on a range of evidence that best gives an overall picture of their learners' performance. Therefore, no single piece of evidence will necessarily be more important than another, as grades will be based on a holistic judgement.

The flexibility in approach this summer allows for schools and colleges to choose appropriate evidence which takes account the variations in learning experiences of learners. In all instances, learners will only be assessed on what they have been taught.

Grades will be determined by schools and colleges to reflect a holistic, fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of each learner's performance across a range of evidence, on the curriculum content that they have been taught.

The approach to grading this year puts trust in the teaching profession and the professional judgement of schools and colleges.

If you require any further information, please let me know.

Fifth Senedd Legacy Report

March 2021



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the Welsh Parliament website: **www.senedd.wales**

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Fifth Senedd Legacy Report

March 2021



About the Chairs' Forum

The Chairs' Forum brings together the Chairs of Senedd committees to coordinate work, address practical matters affecting the operation of committees, and consider cross-cutting strategic issues. The Forum is chaired by the Llywydd and meets approximately six times a year.

Chair:



Elin Jones MS (Llywydd)
Plaid Cymru

Current membership:



Mick Antoniw MS
Welsh Labour



Jayne Bryant MS
Welsh Labour



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Welsh Conservatives



Russell George MS
Welsh Conservatives



John Griffiths MS
Welsh Labour



Llyr Gruffydd MS
Plaid Cymru



Mike Hedges MS
Welsh Labour



Ann Jones MS
Welsh Labour



Dai Lloyd MS
Plaid Cymru



Lynne Neagle MS
Welsh Labour



David Rees MS
Welsh Labour



Bethan Sayed MS
Plaid Cymru



Helen Mary Jones MS
Plaid Cymru

The Chairs' Forum

Introduction

- 1.** As we approach the end of the Fifth Senedd, we have reflected on our time as Chairs of Senedd committees and have, in this report, identified certain aspects of our experience that we believe will be useful to the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee when it comes to considering its role in the process of establishing committees.
- 2.** This is not an account of our committees' work or an analysis of their effectiveness. Rather we offer our collective view based on our experience of chairing Senedd committees over the past five years.
- 3.** We begin the report with our view on the role of Chairs before moving to consider some of the more practical aspects of committee operation.
- 4.** The table at Annex A provides a summary of our conclusions and recommendations.

1. The role of Chairs

1.1. Election of Chairs

5. We are the first cohort of Senedd committee Chairs to have been elected by the Senedd. We unanimously endorse this approach.
6. Being elected by the Senedd has enabled us to operate with greater independence and authority.
7. In a Senedd that has seen significant changes to political groups and committee memberships, and faced great uncertainty as a consequence of EU exit and the COVID-19 pandemic, Chairs of committees have provided an important consistency to Senedd Business.

1.2. Commitment to the role

8. Chairing a committee is a significant commitment. A Chair must invest considerable time outside committee meetings to perform effectively. The role is one of providing strategic leadership and direction, and of building relationships with committee members that in turn facilitates trust and consensus. The role also requires engagement with stakeholders, representing the committee at external events, media work, developing policy expertise and undertaking professional development.
9. Ideally, Chairs of committees would be freed of other parliamentary duties to enable them to focus full-time on being a committee Chair e.g. not sitting on another committee and/or not being a party spokesperson.

Recommendation 1. Whilst recognising that this might be difficult to achieve, we recommend that the leaders of political party groups in the Sixth Senedd consider minimising the parliamentary duties placed on members of their group who are committee Chairs and to avoid potential conflicts of interest when allocating spokesperson responsibilities.

1.3. Setting the right direction

10. It is important that committee Chairs do all they can to ensure that the right culture is embedded within their committees at the start of a Senedd, so that committee members, particularly new Members of the Senedd, understand the value of committee work and are committed to it.

11. Our experience of the Fifth Senedd has shown that taking time at the start of a committee's life to develop a strategy that engages committee members, sets objectives, and maps out how a committee wishes to operate is essential to achieving this.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd committees spend time establishing long-term objectives for their work, a strategy for the delivery of their objectives, and establishing a vision of how they wish to operate, before determining the details of their work programmes.

12. It follows that Chairs, through their Clerks, should ensure that any Member joining a committee during the course of a Senedd receives an appropriate induction to ensure that they are aware of how the committee they are joining operates. Additionally, a new committee member should be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the future development of a committee's strategic approach.

13. Effective scrutiny requires prioritisation. Our experience has shown the importance of prioritising a limited number of issues and maintaining a focus on them over time. This often has a greater impact on Government policy and delivery.

Engagement

14. Committees in the Fifth Senedd have engaged with citizens, stakeholders and expertise in a range of ways.

15. Considering who a committee needs to engage with, and how best to engage with them, to achieve a committee's objectives is a routine part of work planning.

16. There is a broader opportunity for committees, when establishing themselves at the start of the next Senedd, to set a more general approach to engagement as part of their individual strategy to achieve the objectives they set.

17. For example, a committee might decide to:

- prioritise having a regular in-person presence across different locations in Wales;
- operate in a predominantly virtual mode;
- spend less time in formal meetings and more time working in other ways;

- prioritise citizen engagement (perhaps through the use of citizens assemblies); and/or
- prioritise expert engagement.

18. Of course, many more approaches are possible, the examples above are provided as an illustration only.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that committees consider their broader approach to engagement when establishing their objectives and strategy at the start of the Sixth Senedd.

19. There is more that can be done to understand the people committees engage with. Consideration should be given to how data can be collected so that committees can better understand who they are engaging with through their work and, perhaps crucially, who they are not yet reaching.

Recommendation 4. We recommend that information about the people committees engage with is collected and reported throughout the Sixth Senedd to enable committees and the Chairs' Forum to monitor who committees are engaging with and whether that engagement is achieving committee objectives.

Committee support

20. The support we, and our committees, receive from Senedd Commission staff is highly valued and appreciated.

21. Whilst a high level of support might be needed for a committee on its establishment and in its early years of operation, the approach to supporting committees should mature with their development and be proportionate to the needs of each committee at a given time.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that Chairs, with the support of their Clerks, periodically consider the support committee members require. There may be a case for adjusting that support as committee members develop in their roles through the course of a Senedd, and as a committee faces different tasks.

1.4. Understanding the impact of committee work

22. We believe that there is more that needs to be done to understand the impact of committee work.

23. Professor Diana Stirbu has been commissioned to develop a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of Senedd committees in the Sixth Senedd.

24. This will include a proposal for how committees can better monitor the diversity of their engagement and how the Chairs' Forum can play a role in considering the overall picture in terms of the diversity of committee engagement.

25. At our meeting on 22 October 2020, we endorsed the approach to be taken by Professor Stirbu to this work and a number of Chairs contributed to her work.

26. A final report of Professor Stirbu's work is expected in April 2021.

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Chairs' Forum considers Professor Stirbu's report at as early an opportunity as possible in the Sixth Senedd.

2. Committee structures

2.1. Size of committees

27. The size of committees varies according to function and political balance requirements.

Policy and Legislation Committees

28. The Policy and Legislation Committees started the Fifth Senedd with eight members. This was a reduction in size compared to the Policy and Legislation Committees that operated in the Fourth Assembly [Senedd], which operated with a membership of 10.

29. On 18 June 2019, the membership of Policy and Legislation Committees was reduced to six members.

30. Whilst some Chairs had misgivings at first about a reduction in the size of committees from eight to six members, due to the heightened risk of inquorate meetings, most believe that attendance and member engagement has improved since the reduction in size.

31. To verify our view on attendance, Senedd Commission officials have provided us with aggregated attendance data for those committees affected by the change in membership numbers.

32. This data provides an indication that attendance improved with the reduction in committee size.¹

33. For ease of illustration, this can be presented as the average number of seats left empty across the affected committees. An empty seat means that a member has not attended a meeting and no substitute has attended in their place i.e. a seat has been left empty for the duration of a meeting.

34. Because of the significant change to how committees have operated since public health restrictions were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have restricted the period for comparison up until the point when committees moved to operating virtually.

¹ A committee member is recorded as having attended a committee meeting if they attend any part of a committee meeting.

Number of members	Mean number of seats left empty per week across affected committees (to the nearest whole seat)
Eight members (before 18 June 2019)	7
Six members (19 June 2019 to 26 April 2020)	4

35. Whilst an observation that is more pertinent for another section of this report, the data we received has also shown a further improvement in attendance for this cohort of committees since they moved to virtual meetings.²

Number of members	Mean number of seats left empty per week across affected committees (to the nearest whole seat)
Six members (when working with virtual meetings i.e. after 27 April 2020)	2

36. We believe that the smaller policy and legislation committees seen in the Fifth Senedd have operated well. An increase in the size of committees, without a reduction in the overall number of committees, would dilute the focus individual Members can bring to committee work (as more Members would be required to sit on multiple committees).

37. The decision on the size of committees is interdependent with considering the number of committees, their functions, and the political make-up of a Senedd.

Recommendation 7. Whilst acknowledging that the factors in paragraph 37 must also be considered, we recommend that a membership of six (and certainly no more than eight), would be a good place for the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee to start when considering the establishment of Policy and Legislation Committees.

38. In making this recommendation, we also note that frequent changes of committee membership are problematic and continuity of committee

² Other factors, beyond the move to meeting virtually, may have contributed to the improvement in attendance. For example, a reduction in competing commitments as a consequence of the public health restrictions.

membership is key to the development of subject expertise and committee cohesion.

Specialist Committees

39. The Legislation, Justice, and Constitution Committee, has operated well with a membership of four, in light of its specific function.

40. Conversely, the Petitions Committee experienced problems with quoracy when it had a membership of four. These have largely abated since it was expanded to five members. The Petitions quoracy problems were also affected by the fact that it had independent members, who are unable to send a substitute in circumstances where they are unable to attend a meeting.

41. The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister has noted that its membership, consisting of all Chairs of other committees, has been too large and considers that a membership of eight would be more appropriate for a committee with its functions.

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the size of the Committee for Scrutiny of the First Minister in the Sixth Senedd be reviewed, in light of experience in the Fifth Senedd.

42. The reduction in the size of the Public Accounts Committee during this Senedd put the political balance on the committee in favour of the opposition. This had a significant impact on PAC's dynamics.

43. The Finance Committee's size did not have a particular bearing on its operation. The Finance Committee also had a political balance in favour of the opposition.

44. The Standards of Conduct Committee has had an increased workload in the Fifth Senedd, necessitating additional meetings and time commitment from its members, as well as additional support.

2. 2. Dual function policy and legislation committees

45. We believe that combined Policy and Legislation Committees i.e. committees that combine both policy and legislative scrutiny roles work well.

46. Non-legislative and legislative actions are interdependent within an area of policy. An understanding of these actions in the round is essential to the effective scrutiny of government.

47. Whilst specific procedures apply to the scrutiny of Bills, there is a wider policy context within which each piece of legislation sits. Subject knowledge is at least as important to the scrutiny of a Bill as procedural familiarity.

48. Members, and Chairs in particular, develop policy knowledge and stakeholder relationships that are invaluable when applied to both functions.

49. The pressure of Bill scrutiny can affect the ability of a committee to pursue other aspects of its remit, particularly when the spread of government Bills is unevenly distributed across policy areas. This can reduce the ability of a committee to scrutinise the Welsh Government in other areas of a committee's remit.

50. There is more that can be done to address some of this pressure without moving away from an operating model for committees that is centred on the dual function approach. We address this

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the dual function policy and legislation committees should continue in the Sixth Senedd.

2.3. Remits

51. In most cases committee remits have been unproblematic. The Policy and Legislation Committees were established without strict boundaries to their remits to allow the pursuit of issues beyond policy silos. This has proved an advantage at times when managing scrutiny workloads and pursuing issues that cut across different Ministerial responsibilities.

52. The External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee was established with a specific remit related to the UK's departure from the EU. Whilst it appears unlikely that a committee with the same remit will be established in the Sixth Senedd, it performed a range of scrutiny functions that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee will need to consider when proposing a committee structure.³

53. Some committees have faced near to unsustainable workloads at times during the course of the Fifth Senedd. In particular, we note the breadth of the Equality, Local Government, and Communities Committee's remit and its Bill

³. Aspects of the EAAL Committee's remit no-longer function due to how the process of EU Exit has progressed since the EAAL Committee's establishment. It is for this reason it appears unlikely that a committee with the same remit will be established in the Sixth Senedd.

scrutiny workload, and the volume of legislation that the Legislation, Justice, and Constitution Committee has had to consider at times alongside its other scrutiny remit.

Number of Bills considered by responsible committee

Responsible committee	Bills
Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee	1
Committee of the Whole Senedd	3
Children, Young People and Education Committee	4
External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee	1
Economy Infrastructure and Skills Committee	1 ⁴
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee	6
Finance Committee ⁵	1
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee	5
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee	2

54. The Petitions Committee has experienced a significant increase in the number of petitions it is required to consider. Consideration will need to be given to how this increased workload is managed, should the receipt of petitions continue to grow in the Sixth Senedd.

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government shares as much information as possible in relation to its legislative programme for the Sixth Senedd at as early a point in the Six Senedd as possible, so that the Business Committee can consider the implications for committees and their workload.

Recommendation 11. The Bill scrutiny process itself can create pinch points for a committee and its staff. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee (or another committee with responsibility for Senedd procedures)

⁴ The Bill remitted to the EIS Committee was withdrawn shortly after introduction (the Bus Services (Wales) Bill).

⁵The Finance Committee also introduced its own Bill, now the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019.

undertakes a review of the Bill scrutiny process to assess whether it is as efficient and effective as it might be.

55. We believe that a degree of additional capacity should be built into the committee system.

56. We acknowledge that the Fifth Senedd's Business Committee originally established a reserve policy and legislation committee that was to be used as a means of alleviating pressures in the committee system and that there was sufficient capacity to create a time-limited committee to consider Senedd Electoral Reform during the course of the Fifth Senedd.

57. Understandably, the reserve committee was swiftly re-tasked to consider the implications for Wales arising from the Brexit process (as the EAAL Committee) leaving that committee with little capacity to consider Bills unrelated to its core remit.⁶

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee, when considering the establishment of committees, should consider how best to build-in additional capacity and flexibility to handle peaks in committee workload.

58. We have seen a number of instances where Senedd committees have worked together during the course of the Fifth Senedd.

59. We have also seen an increase in interparliamentary working, for example through the Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit and in relation to the UK-wide Common Policy Frameworks.

60. We endorse Senedd committees working together.

61. We recognise the value that interparliamentary working can bring to our work.

Recommendation 13. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee considers whether there are any steps it can take to help enable

⁶ The EAAL Committee considered one Senedd Bill, the Regulation of Registered Social Landlords (Wales) Bill. It managed this by creating a sub-committee. It consider a wide range of other legislative matters, including UK Bills, the process of retaining EU Law, and legislation associated with the common frameworks programme.

joint working between Senedd committees and interparliamentary working, for example when timetabling committee business.

2. 4. Virtual meetings

62. In our view, virtual and hybrid means of conducting committee business are here to stay in one form or another, alongside the holding of in-person meetings at the Senedd and elsewhere.

63. Our experience of operating remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that committees can operate effectively through the use of virtual meeting technology.

64. Moreover, this use of technology has the potential to make committee business more accessible and flexible in a number of ways. This is of benefit to both committee members and those invited to contribute to committee work.

65. Without the restrictions of physical space and the need to account for travel time, virtual meetings can be convened more quickly and at times during the week that might not have been suitable for Senedd business previously.

66. This flexibility also has the potential to enable committee business to take better account of the family responsibilities of committee members, staff, and those invited to contribute to committee business.

Recommendation 14. We recommend that, within the parameters set for committee business by the Senedd Commission and the Business Committee in the Sixth Senedd, it should be a matter for individual committees to decide their mode of operation on a meeting by meeting basis i.e. whether in person, hybrid, and/or remote meetings will best enable them to achieve their objectives.

2. 5. Chairs' Forum

67. The Chairs' Forum has added value to our work by providing a space within which we can address cross-cutting scrutiny issues, share good practice, and look more strategically at the work of committees.

68. Additionally, as a consultative forum, it has helped inform Senedd Commission and Business Committee decisions affecting the operation of committees. For example, in relation to timetabling and changes to business necessitated by the Coronavirus pandemic.

69. We believe the Chairs' Forum works well as an informal group and welcome the Business Committee's decision to provide the Forum with a timetabled meeting slot at the end of each half term.

Recommendation 15. We recommend that the Llywydd establishes a Chairs' Forum in the Sixth Senedd and that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee timetables a regular slot for it to meet.

Annex A – Summary of our view

Election of Chairs

We are the first cohort of Senedd committee Chairs to have been elected by the Senedd. We unanimously endorse this approach.

Commitment to the role

Recommendation 1. Whilst recognising that this might be difficult to achieve, we recommend that the leaders of political party groups in the Sixth Senedd consider minimising the parliamentary duties placed on members of their group who are committee Chairs and to avoid potential conflicts of interest when allocating spokesperson responsibilities.

Setting the right direction

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd committees spend time establishing long-term objectives for their work, a strategy for the delivery of their objectives, and establishing a vision of how they wish to operate, before determining the details of their work programmes.

Recommendation 3. We recommend that committees consider their broader approach to engagement when establishing their objectives and strategy at the start of the Sixth Senedd.

Recommendation 4. We recommend that information about the people committees engage with is collected and reported throughout the Sixth Senedd to enable committees, and the Chairs' Forum, to monitor who committees are engaging with and whether that engagement is achieving committee objectives.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that Chairs, with the support of their Clerks, periodically consider the support committee members require. There may be a case for adjusting that support as committee members develop in their roles through the course of a Senedd, and as a committee faces different tasks.

Understanding the impact of committee work

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Chairs' Forum considers Professor Stirbu's report at as early an opportunity as possible in the Sixth Senedd.

Size of committees

Recommendation 7. Whilst acknowledging that the factors in paragraph 36 must also be considered, we recommend that a membership of six (and certainly no more than eight), would be a good place for the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee to start when considering the establishment of policy and legislation committees.

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the size of the Committee for Scrutiny of the First Minister in the Sixth Senedd be reviewed, in light of experience in the Fifth Senedd.

Dual function policy and legislation committees

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the dual function policy and legislation committees should continue in the Sixth Senedd.

Remits

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government shares as much information as possible in relation to its legislative programme for the Sixth Senedd at as early a point in the Six Senedd as possible, so that the Business Committee can consider the implications for committees and their workload.

Recommendation 11. The Bill scrutiny process itself can create pinch points for a committee and its staff. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee (or another committee with responsibility for Senedd procedures) undertakes a review of the Bill scrutiny process to assess whether it is as efficient and effective as it might be.

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee, when considering the establishment of committees, should consider how best to build-in additional capacity and flexibility to handle peaks in committee workload.

Recommendation 13. We recommend that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee considers whether there are any steps it can take to help enable joint working between Senedd committees and interparliamentary working, for example when timetabling committee business.

Virtual meetings

Recommendation 14. We recommend that, within the parameters set for committee business by the Senedd Commission and the Business Committee in the Sixth Senedd, it should be a matter for individual committees to decide their mode of operation on a meeting by meeting basis i.e. whether in person, hybrid, and/or remote meetings will best enable them to achieve their objectives.

Chairs' Forum

Recommendation 15. We recommend that the Llywydd establishes a Chairs' Forum in the Sixth Senedd and that the Sixth Senedd's Business Committee timetables a regular slot for it to meet.

The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the Welsh Parliament website: www.senedd.wales/SeneddPetitions

Copies of this document can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

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Fifth Senedd Legacy Report

March 2021



About the Committee

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddPetitions

Committee Chair:



Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Welsh Conservatives

Current Committee membership:



Michelle Brown MS
Independent



Neil McEvoy MS
Propel



Jack Sargeant MS
Welsh Labour



Leanne Wood MS
Plaid Cymru

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1. We recommend that our successor committee should consider at the outset how it intends to identify the petitions on which it wishes to undertake detailed scrutiny, and to resource its work in line with that.Page 21

Recommendation 2. Our successor committee should seek to resolve most petitions in a timely manner, both for the benefit of petitioners and to ensure that it has the time and capacity to conduct detailed scrutiny on issues of its choosing. If petition volumes are maintained, this will likely mean agreeing to take no further action on some petitions following their initial consideration.Page 21

Recommendation 3. Based on our experience of considering time-sensitive petitions during the Covid-19 pandemic, we recommend that the next committee should give consideration to whether or not petitions should be referred to it at the first opportunity, even when they are still collecting signatures. This consideration should include whether this would cause practical difficulties and the impact that such a change would have on the administration of the petitions process.Page 22

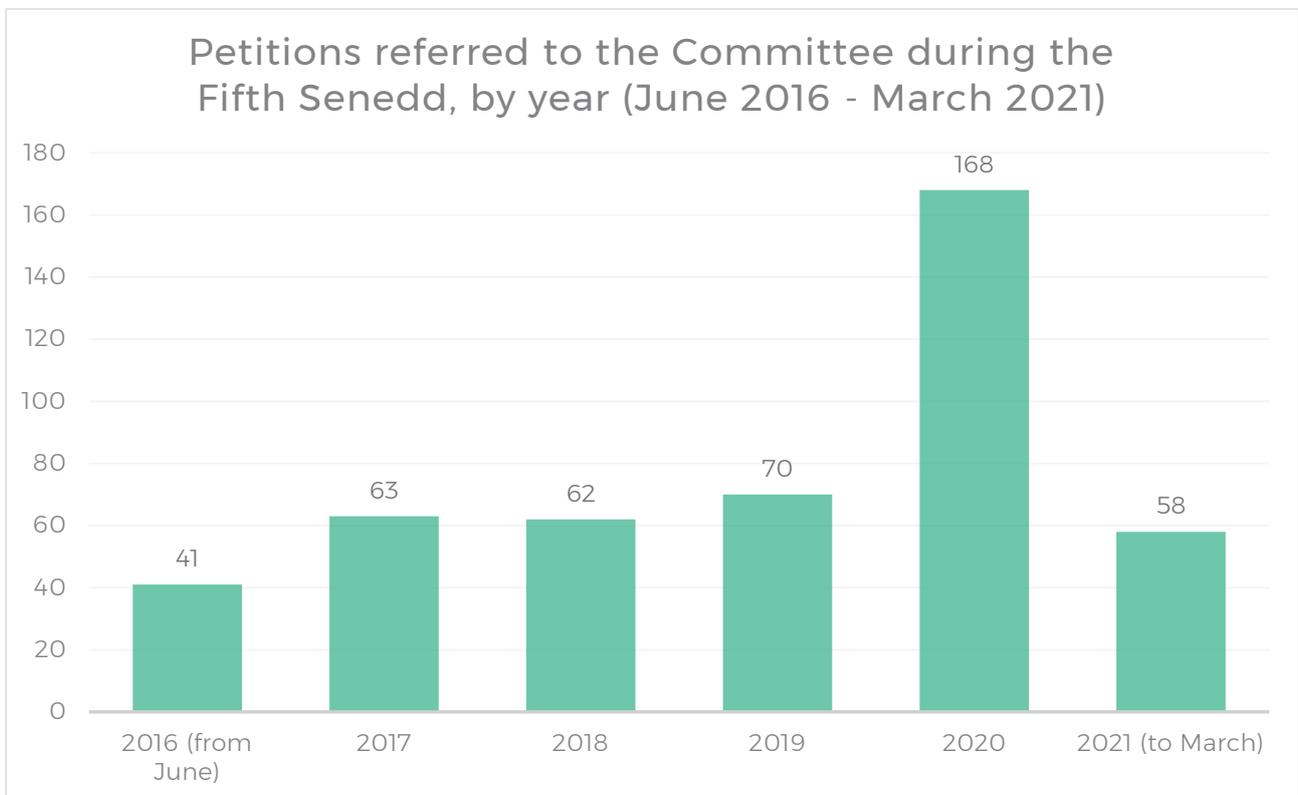
Recommendation 4. More detailed consideration should be given to whether the current 50 signature threshold for the consideration of petition remains appropriate, or whether it should be increased in the early part of the Sixth Senedd.....Page 23

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the threshold for considering debates on petitions should be maintained at 10,000 signatures and that the Petitions Committee should retain its discretion to determine which petitions are referred for a debate. We note that it may be possible for this threshold to be reduced in the future should the volume of petitioning reduce.....Page 24

1. Engaging with the people of Wales

The petitions process is one of the primary mechanisms through which the public can engage with and influence the work of the Senedd.

The use of the Senedd’s petitions system has grown steadily since it was introduced in 2007, however there has been a dramatic increase in the number of petitions received and the volume of signatures they have collected during the latter part of this Senedd term.



Whilst both of these measures have been increasing over the long-term, there are two primary factors behind the rapid increases in petitioning that have been seen recently:

1. the Covid-19 pandemic; and
2. the launch of a new Senedd petitions website in April 2020.

Since early 2020 Covid-19, and the changes to everyday life introduced in an effort to control the virus, have had profound implications for every person, business and organisation in Wales. It has resulted in a significant and sustained growth in the

number of petitions received, in particular since the Welsh Government began to seek to ease the first lockdown restrictions in May 2020. It has also caused a change in the type and subject-matter of petitions submitted to the Senedd, many of which now call for immediate changes to be made to regulations or support packages, as opposed to the previously more common petitions which seek long-term changes to policy or legislation.

Simultaneously, a new online petitions system for the Senedd was launched on 30 April 2020 and was the culmination of a two-year project to modernise and improve the experience of creating and signing petitions. It included a number of new features and improvements to the previous petitions website intended to make the petitions process simpler and more user-friendly, including a ‘mobile-first’ design, reflecting the fact that the majority of users now interact with petitions using mobile devices, and improved integration with social media.

Because of the simultaneous impact of both of these factors, it is difficult to determine whether the significant growth in the number and size of petitions experienced from May 2020 onwards has been due primarily to one or both of these factors. As a result, it is also difficult to predict whether the increase will be sustained over the medium and long-term.

However, it appears likely that at least some of the growth in petitions is likely to remain given the improved functionality and profile of the Senedd’s petitions process, allied with increased awareness of devolved powers and responsibilities as a result of the pandemic.

Petitions Committee
Our work during the Fifth Senedd

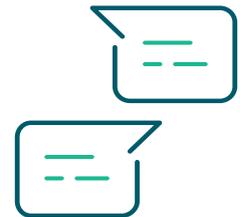
NEW PETITIONS
CONSIDERED BY
THE COMMITTEE

462



14
COMMITTEE
REPORTS

30
PETITIONS
DEBATED



1,000,000+
TOTAL NUMBER OF
SIGNATORIES ON PETITIONS



87
WITNESS
APPEARANCES

LARGEST
PETITION **67,940**
SIGNATURES

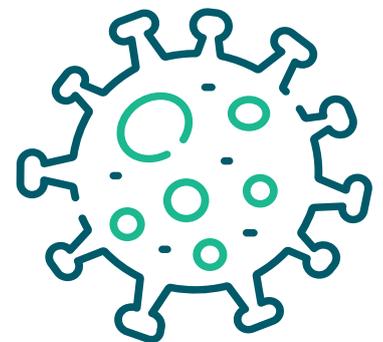


COMMITTEE
MEETINGS



81

192
ADMISSABLE
PETITIONS
ABOUT COVID-19



2. The petitions process

Since the Fifth Senedd's Petitions Committee was established in June 2016 we have implemented several significant changes to the petitions process. Many of these followed up the recommendations made by our predecessor committee in the Fourth Assembly as part of its 'Review of Public Petitions Arrangements'.¹

In March 2017 the Senedd agreed to make several changes to Standing Order 23 (Public Petitions) on the basis of our recommendations. These were:

- to increase the number of signatures required for a petition to be considered by the Petitions Committee, from 10 to 50 signatures;
- to end the distinction between petitions from individuals and organisations (which had not previously been required to collect signatures);
- to restrict the eligibility for submitting petitions to people or organisations with a base in Wales; and
- to require petitions to have collected signatures using the Senedd's petitions system or on paper (i.e. to no longer accept petitions from other websites).

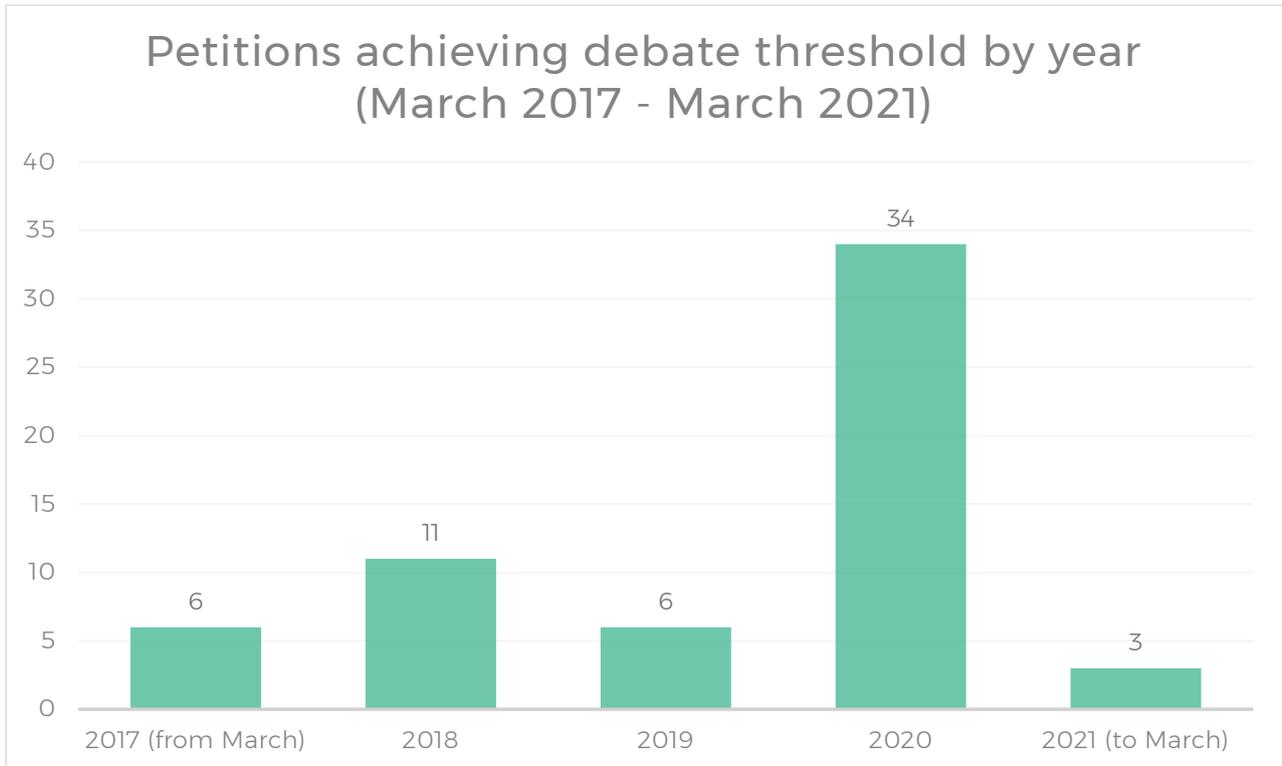
We also introduced a six month limit to the length of time in which petitions can collect signatures and agreed a new process with the Business Committee, under which we would consider referring petitions with more than 5,000 signatures to be debated during a Senedd Plenary meeting. This has enabled petitions with significant levels of support to be debated by the full Senedd within a shorter timeframe, in addition to our existing ability to hold debates on reports we have produced. All petitions with more than 50 signatures have continued to be scrutinised by the Petitions Committee.

Since the introduction of this process in March 2017, 24 petitions have been debated as a result. Six other petitions have been debated on the basis of reports produced by the Petitions Committee. A table can be found in section 3 of this report.

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the increases in both the number of petitions being received and the number achieving the debate

¹ Petitions Committee, [Review of Public Petitions Arrangements](#), February 2016

threshold (discussed in section 1), from 1 December 2020 we raised the threshold for considering debates on petitions to 10,000 signatures.



Nb. Threshold was introduced in March 2017 and changed from 5,000 to 10,000 signatures from 1 December 2020.

This was a difficult decision, which we took after careful consideration. We are acutely aware of the need to provide clear information and expectations to everyone using the petitions process and decided such a change was necessary because the rapid growth in the number of petitions achieving the threshold, and demands on Plenary time, meant that we were increasingly only able to schedule debates on a relatively small number of petitions.

We pledged to keep this threshold under review until the end of this Senedd. Our recommendation on this and several other issues relating to the petitions process can be found in section 4 of this report.

3. Work undertaken by the Petitions Committee

We have considered each petition referred to us on its own merits. The majority have been scrutinised through consideration of the matters that they raise at Committee meetings, whilst others have been selected for scrutiny in other ways.

Committee meetings

During the Fifth Senedd, we have considered a total of 462 new petitions. These petitions have collectively received more than 1 million signatures. In addition, we continued to consider updates on a number of petitions carried over from our predecessor Committee in the Fourth Assembly, meaning that we have considered more than 500 separate petitions over the past five years.

We have sought responses on all petitions referred to us from the Welsh Government and other organisations when appropriate to the issue raised.

We have offered the lead petitioner(s) the opportunity to provide further information or comment on the responses that we have received in advance of our discussion of their petition. The vast majority of petitions were considered at more than one committee meeting.

We have also held a number of evidence sessions with petitioners, Ministers and other witnesses to enable more detailed collection of evidence where we felt that this would aid our consideration of the issues raised.

Reports published by the Committee

We have published 14 reports on petitions during this Senedd. Some of these have been summaries of the evidence received, while others have included conclusions or recommendations for future action. Where we made recommendations we have sought and considered a formal response from the Welsh Government.

The following reports have been published during the Fifth Senedd:

Petition(s)	Date	
P-04-668 Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer	February 2017	<u>Report</u> made three recommendations. Two were accepted by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-05-710 Ensure Disabled People can Access Public Transport As and When They Need It	October 2017	<u>Report</u> made twelve recommendations. All were accepted by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-04-564 Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital	January 2018	<u>Summary of evidence</u> considered by the Committee.
P-04-472 Make the MTAN Law and Call in all opencast mining applications & P-04-575 Call in all opencast mining applications	April 2018	<u>Summary of evidence</u> considered by the Committee.
P-05-785 Suspend Marine Licence 12/45/ML to dump radioactive marine sediments from the Hinkley Point nuclear site into Wales coastal waters off Cardiff	May 2018	<u>Summary of evidence</u> considered by the Committee.
P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People	July 2018	<u>Report</u> made ten recommendations. Seven were accepted and three accepted in principle by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-04-628 To improve access to Education and services in British Sign Language	October 2018	<u>Report</u> made four recommendations. Three were accepted and one accepted in principle by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan-Abergavenny Road	October 2018	<u>Report</u> made one recommendation. The <u>Welsh Government</u> wrote to the Committee in response.
P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently	February 2019	<u>Interim report</u> summarising the evidence received ahead of an evidence session with the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services.
P-05-784 Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal - recognition and support	March 2019	<u>Report</u> made ten recommendations. Eight were accepted and one accepted in principle by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-05-736 To make mental health services more accessible	September 2019	<u>Report</u> made seven recommendations. Five were

Petition(s)	Date	
		accepted and two accepted in principle by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-04-433 CCTV in Slaughterhouses	January 2020	<u>Report</u> made three recommendations. One was accepted and two accepted in principle by the <u>Welsh Government</u> .
P-05-886 Stop the Red Route	March 2021	<u>Report</u> made six recommendations. The Committee was awaiting a response by the Welsh Government at the time of writing.
P-05-805 Fair Deal for Supply Teachers	March 2021	<u>Report</u> made four recommendations. The Committee was awaiting a response by the Welsh Government at the time of writing.

Plenary debates held on petitions

We have held 30 debates on petitions during the Fifth Senedd. Six of these were debates on reports we have published whilst, since March 2017, we have also requested debates on petitions which have gathered large numbers of signatures (see section 2). This process has allowed issues of significant local or national concern to be discussed by the Senedd as a whole, without the Petitions Committee having been required to publish a report beforehand.

The following debates have been held during the Fifth Senedd:

Petition	Date	
P-04-668 Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer	29 March 2017	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.
P-05-756 Live Music Protection in Wales	12 July 2017	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,383 signatures.
P-05-781 Port Talbot Community Against the Super Prison	6 December 2017	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 8,791 signatures.
P-05-710 Ensure Disabled People can Access Public Transport as and When They Need it	31 January 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.
P-05-796 Calling on the Welsh Government to Ban The Use of Wild Animals in Circuses in Wales	7 March 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 6,398 signatures.
P-05-785 Suspend Marine Licence 12/45/ML to dump radioactive marine sediments from the	23 May 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.

Petition	Date	
Hinkley Point nuclear site into Wales coastal waters off Cardiff		
P-05-896 Pembrokeshire says NO!! To the closure of Withybush A&E!	26 September 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 40,045 signatures.
P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People	3 October 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.
P-05-828 Presumption in favour of rural schools	21 November 2018	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,125 signatures.
P-04-628 To improve access to Education and services in British Sign Language	6 February 2019	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.
P-05-849 All men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer	6 March 2019	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 6,345 signatures.
P-05-784 Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal - recognition and support	22 May 2019	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>report</u> published by the Petitions Committee.
P-05-869 Declare a Climate Emergency and fit all policies with zero-carbon targets	19 June 2019	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 6,148 signatures.
P-05-854 Make Learning Disability training mandatory for hospital staff	6 November 2019	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,654 signatures.
P-05-967 Welsh Government to amend its NDR relief policy to help keep Debenhams stores open in Wales	8 July 2020	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,790 signatures.
P-05-1003 Demand an EIA now on the dumping of radioactively contaminated mud in Welsh waters	21 October 2020	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 10,692 signatures.
P-05-992 We call on the Welsh Government to create a common body of knowledge about Welsh history that all pupils will learn	4 November 2020	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 7,927 signatures.
P-05-1000 Make it compulsory for Black and POC UK histories to be taught in the Welsh education curriculum	4 November	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 34,736 signatures.

Petition	Date	
P-05-1060 Allow supermarkets to sell “non-essential” items during lockdown	11 November 2020	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 67,940 signatures.
P-05-1010 An independent inquiry into the 2020 flooding in Rhondda Cynon Taf so that lessons are learned	9 December 2020	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,743 signatures.
P-05-1074 Raise the number of people allowed in outdoor spaces so football can restart for all teams in Wales	13 January 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,330 signatures.
P-05-1063 Open golf courses as it plays an integral part to the improvement of both physical and mental health	13 January 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 6,317 signatures.
P-05-1053 Keep gyms open and consider them as important as shops should another national lockdown take place	13 January 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 20,616 signatures.
P-05-1032 Legislate to prevent people from changing Welsh house names	20 January 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 18,103 signatures.
P-05-1117 Give Police Officers the Covid Vaccination as a priority	3 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 10,879 signatures.
P-05-1119 Prioritise teachers, school and childcare staff for COVID-19 vaccination	3 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 16,288 signatures.
P-05-1001 Hold an independent inquiry into the choice of site for the proposed new Velindre Cancer Centre	3 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,241 signatures.
P-05-1018 Support for the current proposed plans to build a new Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff, in any future inquiry	3 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 11,392 signatures.
P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!	10 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,159 signatures.
P-05-1056 Give Local Authorities powers to control the housing	17 March 2021	<u>Debate</u> on a <u>petition</u> which collected 5,386 signatures.

Petition	Date	
market in rural and tourist areas of Wales		

Petition outcomes

Determining what constitutes a successful petition is often not straightforward. Ultimately, whether or not a petition has achieved its aims depends upon the objectives or aspirations of the petitioner and those signing and supporting it.

The role of the Petitions Committee and the Senedd’s petitions process is to apply scrutiny to the issues raised by petitions. We have ensured, therefore, that all petitions referred to the Committee receive a formal response from the relevant decision-maker (usually from the Welsh Government) and are discussed by the Petitions Committee. This is considered as an outcome or a ‘success’ in itself by many petitioners, for whom the petitions process is as much about raising the profile of an issue or the ability to make their voices heard as the eventual result. For others, a petition is often part of a wider campaign or set of actions.

Given the number of petitions received, it is our role as a Committee to select which issues to give more detailed consideration to. We have done this through holding evidence sessions, seeking further written evidence, referring them to be considered to another Senedd committee, or publishing reports on the issues raised. As referred to in other sections, other petitions have been debated by the Senedd as a whole.

A significant number of petitions we have considered have achieved some or all of their aims. Whilst not an exhaustive list, the following is a list of some of the petitions which have achieved outcomes during the Fifth Senedd:

P-05-772 No to Flint Castle's planned Iron Ring

The petition called for a proposed sculpture outside of Flint Castle to be scrapped due to the perception that it celebrated the “Iron Ring” of castles that Edward I built as part of his military campaign in Wales.

The installation was cancelled by the Welsh Government and the investment diverted to make improvements to the visitor experience at the castle.

P-05-781 Port Talbot Community Against the Super Prison

The petition was submitted in opposition to a proposal for land owned by the Welsh Government to be sold to the Ministry of Justice for the development of a ‘super prison’ in Baglan.

During our consideration of the petition, the Welsh Government indicated that they would not facilitate any further prison development and the proposal was withdrawn.

P-05-789 Review support for asylum seekers accessing further education

The petition sought for access to financial support programmes to be changed so that asylum seekers would be better supported to participate in further education.

The Welsh Government published its Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan in January 2019, which included plans to implement actions called for by the petition.

P-05-796 Calling on the Welsh Government to Ban The Use of Wild Animals in Circuses in Wales

During our consideration of the petition the Welsh Government committed to bringing forward legislation to ban the use of wild animals in circuses.

The Wild Animals in Circuses (Wales) Act 2020 was agreed by the Senedd on 15 July 2020 and became law on 7 September 2020.

P-05-797 Ensure access to the cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi, as a matter of urgency

The petition called for a resolution to negotiations about access to the new cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi®, on the NHS.

In November 2019 the Welsh Government agreed a deal to make Orkambi® and another cystic fibrosis drug available to patients through the NHS in Wales.

P-05-801 Save the trees and ground in Roath Mill and Roath Brook Gardens before it's too late

This petition urged Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to stop and review flood prevention work which would widen a brook and cause the felling of a number of trees.

During our consideration of the petition, NRW undertook a re-assessment of the work planned in Roath Mill and Roath Brook Gardens and decided not to proceed with the final stages of the scheme.

P-05-816 Say 'NO' to pheasant shooting on Welsh public land

The petition was submitted with the aim of preventing further commercial shooting operations on publicly-owned land.

It was confirmed in July 2018 that NRW's Board had agreed it would not offer any extension to the leases for pheasant shooting rights once they expire in March 2019, following an intervention by the Welsh Government.

P-05-817 Specialist prosthetics for child amputees

The petition called for funding to enable child amputees in Wales to have access to specialist sports prosthetics.

During our consideration of the petition, the Welsh Government announced the creation of a new fund to provide sports prosthetics for children and young people in Wales in October 2019.

P-05-854 Make learning disability training mandatory for hospital staff

The petitioners called for training on learning disabilities to be provided to all healthcare staff following the death of their brother in 2009.

During a Plenary debate on the petition, the Welsh Government announced that learning disability awareness training would be incorporated into the core training programme for all healthcare staff as part of mandatory equality and diversity training, supported by more in-depth targeted training for staff in key roles.

P-05-856 Ban the sale of puppies by pet shops and all commercial 3rd party dealers in Wales (Lucy's Law)

The petition called for a ban on the sale of puppies by pet shops and all commercial third-party dealers.

On 23 March 2021, the Senedd agreed the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (Wales) Regulations 2021 which will make it an offence for commercial third parties to sell puppies and kittens under 6 months from September 2021.

P-05-906 Save Sam Davies Ward at Barry Hospital

The petition sought to prevent the closure of an older persons' acute rehabilitation ward at Barry Hospital.

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board acknowledged the petition and agreed to review keep the ward open in the immediate term and to further review plans as part a wider set of reforms.

P-05-946 Save Royal Glamorgan A&E

The petition was submitted following a proposal to replace A&E at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital with a minor Injuries unit, as part of the wider South Wales Programme.

In June 2020, following the community campaign, the petition and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was decided that proposals around A&E services should be paused and that a full A&E services to remain in place.

P-05-995 Freedom to Donate Blood

The petition called for the restrictions preventing gay and bisexual men from donating blood unless they had abstained from having sex to be lifted.

It was announced in December 2020 that rules which prevented many gay men from donating blood would be changed.

P-05-1019 Award teacher predicted grades to all Welsh students for examination 2020

The petition called for all students receiving results in 2020 to receive 'Centre Assessed Grades' without any external moderation, in response to concerns raised about the fairness of those grades.

In August 2020, the Welsh Government announced that A level, AS, GCSE, Skills Challenge Certificate and Welsh Baccalaureate grades in Wales would be awarded on the basis of Centre Assessment Grades.

P-05-1025 Ensure fairness for students taking exams in 2021 and P-05-1055 Cancel GCSE and A level examinations

The petitions (1025 and 1055) sought to ensure that students who would have examinations in 2021 were not disadvantaged due to the impact of Covid-19 on their education.

In January 2021 the Welsh Government confirmed that learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre Determined Grade model rather than examinations.

P-05-1118 Allow parents of under 1 year old to form a support bubble in new Tier 4 Covid restrictions

The petition called for parents of new born babies or young children to be able to form an ‘extended household’ (commonly known as a support bubble) with another household during Coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

The restrictions were amended to allow for this in February 2021.

P-05-1137 Call for fair funding for the National Library of Wales by the Welsh Government

The petition raised concerns over planned cuts to the workforce and services at the National Library of Wales. During the Committee’s consideration of the petition, the Welsh Government announced additional funding for the Library in financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 and intended to support key recommendations into its future sustainability.

4. Reflections for the Sixth Senedd

On the basis of our experience during this Senedd term, we have made several recommendations for the consideration of our successor committee and the next Senedd.

Committee processes

Overall, we consider that the processes which support our work as a Committee have functioned well during the Fifth Senedd. We believe that it remains important for the Petitions Committee to consider all petitions referred to it and that securing a response from the Welsh Government, or another relevant body, prior to this has served to make this consideration both efficient and meaningful.

A key challenge is how the Committee should best manage the volume of petitions it receives in a way which enables it to carry out detailed scrutiny on issues of its choosing. We believe that it is important that the Committee seeks to identify those petitions on which it wishes to take further evidence or give more in depth consideration to at an early stage, as this is where it can add significant value to the petitions process.

To enable it to do so, there is a need to resolve other petitions in an efficient way. Closing petitions is rarely an easy decision, but doing so is important to ensure that the Committee's workload does not become overwhelming and so that Committee meetings do not become solely focused on processing correspondence. We also observe that the respective positions of the petitioner and the Government (or other body) are generally pretty clear at an early stage and that protracted exchanges of correspondence, especially when little progress is being made on the issue, can have little practical impact and be frustrating for those involved.

Recommendation 1. We recommend that our successor committee should consider at the outset how it intends to identify the petitions on which it wishes to undertake detailed scrutiny, and to resource its work in line with that.

Recommendation 2. Our successor committee should seek to resolve most petitions in a timely manner, both for the benefit of petitioners and to ensure that it has the time and capacity to conduct detailed scrutiny on issues of its choosing. If petition volumes are maintained, this will likely mean agreeing to take no further action on some petitions following their initial consideration.

Time sensitive petitions

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a change to the type of petitions received since spring 2020. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the number of petitions calling for immediate action, such as changes to restrictions or calls for more support for specific businesses. These have prompted us to reflect on the process through which petitions are referred to us for consideration.

Under the Committee’s established processes, petitions are required to close for signatures before they can be considered. However, this can be problematic when immediate action is required but the closing date chosen by petitioners is some time in the future. It has resulted in a significant administrative burden for the staff supporting the petitions process and, on occasions, petitions being out-of-date by the time they are referred to us for consideration.

Recommendation 3. Based on our experience of considering time-sensitive petitions during the Covid-19 pandemic, we recommend that the next committee should give consideration to whether or not petitions should be referred to it at the first opportunity, even when they are still collecting signatures. This consideration should include whether this would cause practical difficulties and the impact that such a change would have on the administration of the petitions process.

Signature thresholds

Threshold for consideration of petitions

The main threshold for petitions is 50 signatures. All petitions collecting this number are referred to the Committee for consideration and receive a response from the Welsh Government, or another decision-maker.

As discussed in section 1, the number of petitions received has increased significantly in the last 12 months and the extent to which this change will prove to be temporary or permanent is currently unclear. However, it is the case that the number of petitions to the Senedd had been steadily increasing before the combined impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a new petitions website.

We have not done a detailed analysis of this issue. However, it is our view that the current 50 signature threshold is too low and results in some petitions being referred to the Petitions Committee which have not demonstrated substantial support. Whilst we believe that the petitions process should continue to be open and accessible, we are concerned that the low threshold has had an impact on

our ability to undertake detailed scrutiny on as many issues as we would have wished to.

We therefore recommend that the threshold should be reviewed by the next committee, alongside the issues referred to in recommendations 1 and 2. We suggest that a figure of 200 or 250 signatures may be justified on the basis of our experience and to ensure that the petitions referred for scrutiny can demonstrate a significant level of public support.

Recommendation 4. More detailed consideration should be given to whether the current 50 signature threshold for the consideration of petition remains appropriate, or whether it should be increased in the early part of the Sixth Senedd.

Debate threshold

Petitions with more than 10,000 signatures are considered for a debate during a Plenary meeting. Between the introduction of this threshold in March 2017 and 1 December 2020 this threshold was 5,000 set at signatures. As referred to in section 2, we pledged to review the impact of that change at the end of the Fifth Senedd.

In the four months the revised target has been in place six petitions have passed 10,000 signatures, indicating that it remains an achievable target. In contrast, 11 petitions received more than 5,000 signatures during the same time period.²

We believe that this change has helped to establish more realistic expectations about the capacity of the Senedd to debate petitions during Plenary meetings, and that avoiding false expectations about the prospect of a debate being held is in the interest of everyone involved.

The threshold should be set at a level at which it is reasonably attainable but does not set unrealistic expectations. We believe that direct Plenary debates on petitions are most impactful if they are relatively uncommon. Our view is also that it is in the interest of the majority of petitions to be scrutinised through committee work, where more detailed consideration can be given to the views of the petitioner(s) and the response from the Welsh Government or other decision-

² For comparison purposes, 22 petitions had collected more than 5,000 signatures in the preceding four month period (August – November 2020), though this was affected by several petitioners closing their petitions early having been notified of the change in advance.

maker. A debate is best suited to circumstances in which an issue is high-profile and/or when a decision needs to be made or challenged quickly.

We consider that the practice that has been adopted recently, where the Chair or a Member of the Petitions Committee has contributed to debates in order to highlight relevant large petitions, should also be maintained as a way to ensure that greater numbers of petitions can be considered during Plenary proceedings.

However, we also note that the Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a substantial increase in the use of the Senedd's petitions process and that it may become possible to reduce the number of signatures required in the future, should the number of petitions received reduce to something more like their previous levels.

We also consider that the Petitions Committee should retain discretion over which issues should be put forward for debate, i.e. a referral should not be automatic. There are a number of reasons why a debate may not be the most appropriate course of action, for example: the circumstances may already have changed; the issue may have been debated or considered in another way recently; or it may be better suited to detailed scrutiny by a committee. In addition, given that the ability to sign Senedd petitions is not restricted by location, we believe that it is reasonable for the number and proportion of signatures collected within Wales to be considered before a debate is requested.

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the threshold for considering debates on petitions should be maintained at 10,000 signatures and that the Petitions Committee should retain its discretion to determine which petitions are referred for a debate. We note that it may be possible for this threshold to be reduced in the future should the volume of petitioning reduce.

Agenda Item 5.3

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the Petitions Committee report in relation to Petition P-05-805: Fair Deal for Supply Teachers

Supply teachers play an important role in providing education to learners across Wales and the Welsh Government is committed to improving pay and conditions for those teachers working in temporary roles.

Following the Supply Model Taskforce report in 2017 and the submission of Petition P-05-805: Fair Deal for Supply Teachers, significant improvements have been made by the Welsh Government to address the concerns and Taskforce recommendations relating to pay and conditions for supply teachers.

The revised National Procurement Service's (NPS) Supply Agency Framework was introduced in September 2019 and includes minimum criteria that framework agencies must meet to ensure fair pay and conditions for agency supply teachers, including a minimum pay rate and the offer of relevant professional learning. Concerns previously raised over inflated agency fees have also been addressed by including a requirement on agencies to provide fixed and transparent pricing schedules to schools, to help them manage their delegated staffing budgets and make an informed decision over agency use.

To trial an alternative method to schools of recruiting supply cover, the Welsh Government established the Supply Cluster Model pilot project in October 2017. The project was well received by the schools that took part and we continue to promote this model to both schools and local authorities, and the benefits of using supply cover via a cluster arrangement.

One of the more complex aspects of this area has been to try to improve circumstances for those working in the supply sector whilst recognising that in Wales there is no one existing model that will suit everyone. This was a point that was acknowledged by the Supply Model Taskforce when it reviewed supply teaching arrangements in 2017¹. In addition, schools are responsible for ensuring there is an appropriate and effective workforce in place, including cover arrangements. Supply teachers can be employed directly or through agencies and, under local management of schools arrangements, schools are best placed to determine what works for them.

I would like to thank the members of the Petitions Committee for their report on the Fair Deal for Supply petition, and for its consideration of the recent and ongoing work undertaken by the Welsh Government in this area.

I have set out my response to the Report's individual recommendations below.

¹ <https://gov.wales/supply-model-taskforce-report>

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends:

That the next Welsh Government should keep the impact that the National Procurement Service's Framework Agreement for the provision of temporary workers and supply teachers, awarded in September 2019, under close review in order to fully understand its impact on the pay and conditions of the supply teaching workforce.

Response: Accept

The NPS monitors agency compliance and collates data against the Framework on a quarterly basis. Agencies are asked to record information against the numbers of bookings, roles recruited to and whether roles for qualified teachers are paid at the minimum of the teachers' main pay scale. Information is also collected against the training requirements, and records how many agency staff have taken up training offers. Since the Framework was established in September 2019, agency compliance has improved significantly, and any instances of agency non-compliance that are reported to the NPS are investigated and addressed with the agency in question.

The Welsh Government will continue to monitor the Framework and implement changes, as required.

Financial Implications – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that:

As recommended by Audit Wales, the Welsh Government should monitor the rate of take-up of the Framework Agreement to understand whether schools are using agencies outside of that contract, and in what numbers.

Response: Accept

Data collated by the NPS in late 2020 indicated that whilst agencies are now adhering to the terms of the Framework, some schools and local authorities were either choosing to use non-Framework agencies to pay a lower rate, or refusing to pay the Framework rate. Following discussions through the Schools Social Partnership Forum, local authorities have committed to supporting the Framework and schools have been asked to include the requirement to adhere to Framework terms in their individual school pay policies. The Welsh Government will continue to engage with local authorities, and promote use of the Framework.

I understand that the NPS reviews the local authority supplier spend information that is submitted to assess how local authorities are procuring services. Whilst this is not

a statutory collection, it enables the NPS to assess where local authorities are procuring services from. Currently these services have been paused due to Covid-19 pressures, and the data available has also been impacted due to the pandemic. Officials will assess how these services can be resumed in the next academic year, and, using data that is provided, will continue to monitor uptake against the Framework.

Financial Implications – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that

The next Welsh Government should give further consideration to alternative arrangements for supporting schools to find and employ supply teachers, including direct employment and the introduction of centralised or regional supply arrangements. We consider that a public sector solution would have significant advantages over the current model.

Response: Accept in principle

Alternative supply models were explored through the work taken forward by the Supply Model Taskforce in 2017. The Taskforce subsequently reported that it could not recommend a single model of delivery that would be appropriate for Wales, although it recommended that alternative options be explored, including a collaborative model. Such a model was trialled from 2017 – 2020, with a range of benefits reported by both the participating schools and supply teachers.

The Welsh Government will give consideration to a further independent review into the employment of supply teachers, which will inform any proposals for alternative supply models which could be established. Any changes to the current mixed model would need to consider the impact on the current supply market, which is well established in Wales. Currently, local authorities and schools are responsible for staffing decisions, including supply cover.

Financial Implications – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Recommendation 4.

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should remit the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body to consider the pay and conditions of supply and temporary teachers as part as part of its responsibilities.

Response: Accept

The 2021 remit letter to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB) includes a direction for the IWPRB to give consideration to potential longer term issues that could be addressed through multi-year remits and/or additional stand-alone remits addressing specific matters in relation to terms and conditions; to include;

- Whether the existing structure for teachers' pay, terms and conditions is fair and appropriate for all school leaders and teachers in Wales, including supply teachers within scope of the STPCD.

The IWPRB is currently considering advice from stakeholders and is due to report with its recommendations by 14 May.

Financial Implications – None. Any additional costs will be drawn from existing programme budgets.

Agenda Item 5.4

Statement by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change: Roads review, [Plenary](#)
[22 June 2021](#)

Diolch, Llywydd. The world's scientists are telling us in very clear terms that we urgently need to cut our greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1990, Welsh emissions have fallen by 31 per cent, but to reach our statutory target of net zero by 2050 we need to do much more. As the UK Climate Change Committee reminded us last week, if we're going to keep temperature rises within safe limits, in the next 10 years we need to more than double all the cuts we've managed over the last 30 years.

To hit the 2050 target, the Climate Change Committee has told us we need to cut emissions in the next decade by 63 per cent, and by 2040 they need to fall by 89 per cent. On our current trajectory, we will not achieve net zero until around 2090. The challenge is stark and will require everyone, including the Government, to consider the impact of their choices.

Transport makes up some 17 per cent of our total emissions and so must play its part. Earlier this year I published the Welsh Government's new Wales transport strategy, 'Llwybr Newydd'. It sets out a bold vision for transport in Wales over the next two decades. It included, for the first time, a modal shift target, which requires us to aim for 45 per cent of journeys to be by sustainable forms of transport by 2045, up from 32 per cent currently. To achieve these targets we need a shift away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive, and invest in real alternatives that give people a meaningful choice.

Our programme for government commits to introducing a far-reaching bus Bill in this Senedd term to make it easier to integrate the timetables of buses and trains. Bus operators have said that the main barrier to increasing patronage is reliability and journey times, so we will take action to give buses greater priority on our roads and we will look too at bus fares.

This year we'll be spending more than any other part of the UK per head on active travel investment to encourage people to walk or cycle for local journeys. Two out of three journeys in Wales are under five miles in length.

With the right investment, and with encouragement, there's huge potential to get most people using sustainable transport for most everyday journeys—not all journeys, not all people, but the majority. It's do-able, and there are many countries where it is already done.

Understanding the data in relation to transport also gives us headroom to make choices, and, as the data and the science change, the choices we have to make alter. We must use the headroom we have wisely if we are to meet our climate change targets. To this end, we are announcing a pause on all new road schemes while we review our existing commitments.

Officials are in the final stages of establishing a roads review panel, which will include some of the UK's leading experts on transport and climate change. The panel will consider setting tests for when new roads are the right solutions for transport problems, in line with the new Wales transport strategy. And I want the review to consider how we can shift spending towards better maintaining our existing roads, rather than building new ones, as was recommended by the cross-party Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee in the last Senedd.

We'll publish the full terms of reference for the review and the full membership in due course. It'll be for the panel to review all of our proposed road investments, whether funded directly by the Welsh Government on the strategic road network, or indirectly, by grants, on the local road network, so that all future projects align with the three priorities of the new transport strategy: to reduce the need to travel, to allow people and goods to move more easily from door to door by sustainable forms of transport, and to encourage people to make the change.

The new Wales transport strategy embeds the use of sustainable transport planning hierarchy, and the panel will use this to make sure we are encouraging travelling by walking, cycling and public transport ahead of private motor vehicles. To make sure this approach is fully embedded in our investment decisions and those taken by other delivery partners, we're also reviewing Welsh transport appraisal guidance, our decision-making framework for transport projects, so that it is consistent with 'Llwybr Newydd' and uses the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of

Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The review will provide an initial report to Ministers within three months of appointment, setting out how it'll go about its task, and the final report shall be provided within nine months of that, setting out the findings of the review.

All parties in this Senedd have committed to taking the threat posed by climate change seriously, and that means acting now to reduce emissions. This will not always be comfortable or easy, Llywydd, but it's what the science requires us to do and what future generations demand of us. Diolch.

(<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/12317#C370213>)

Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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