

Concise Minutes – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

This meeting can be viewed

Video Conference via Zoom

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

Meeting date: Wednesday, 20 October
2021

<http://senedd.tv/en/12565>

Meeting time: 09.02 – 10.31

Remote

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Jenny Rathbone MS (Chair) Jane Dodds MS Altaf Hussain MS Sarah Murphy MS Sioned Williams MS Ken Skates MS
Witnesses:	Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice Maureen Howell, Welsh Government Paul Neave, Welsh Government
Committee Staff:	Rhys Morgan (Clerk) Claire Fiddes (Deputy Clerk) Yan Thomas (Deputy Clerk)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting of the Equality and Social Justice Committee.



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

1.2 The Chair stated that if for any reason she dropped out of the meeting, the Committee agreed that Sarah Murphy MS would become Temporary Chair in accordance with Standing Order 17.22.

1.3 No apologies were received from Members. Sioned Williams MS declared an interest for item 2 as a member of a credit union.

2 Debt and the pandemic – scrutiny session with the Minister for Social Justice

2.1 Members received evidence from the Minister for Social Justice

2.2 During the evidence session, the Minister agreed:

- To provide statistics of the number of cases where addiction was an underlying factor of debt.
- To provide more information on the sustainability and support given to energy advice projects.
- To provide information on a strategy that pulls together the causes of debt and poverty, particularly relating to the national insurance increase, universal credit cuts and fuel poverty.
- To provide more information on the role of the equalities data unit.
- To provide more information on how the Welsh Government supports those in work who are pushed into debt, but do not qualify for government support.
- To send information of the Welsh Government view on debt bonfires.
- To confirm whether the six month notice period currently in place is to be extended until the Renting Homes Act 2016 comes into force and what assessment has been made of what may happen if there is a gap until the Act comes into force.
- To provide more information on what the government is doing to support victims of domestic abuse who may have debt problems.

3 Papers to note

3.1 Correspondence from the Future Generations Commissioner regarding equality and social justice findings – 5 October 2021

3.1a Members noted the correspondence.

3.2 Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice to the Future Generations Commissioner responding to the Future Generations Report 2020 – 8 October 2021

3.2a Members noted the correspondence.

3.3 Correspondence from the Federation of Small Businesses Wales regarding the Committee inquiry into debt and pandemic – 13 October 2021

3.3a Members noted the correspondence.

4 Motion under SO17.42(ix) to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

4.1 The motion was agreed.

5 Consideration of evidence – scrutiny session with the Minister for Social Justice

5.1 Members considered the evidence received under item 2.

6 EU Settlement Scheme

6.1 The Chair gave her apologies for this item and Sarah Murphy MS chaired the remainder of the meeting.

6.2 The Committee agreed to publish this and future monitoring reports to demonstrate the Committee's monitoring of this issue.

6.3 The Committee agreed to share the published report with the Independent Monitoring Authority.

6.4 The Committee agreed to request the Welsh Government's latest assessment of the EUSS in Wales, particularly with regard to how it will support late applicants and pre-settled citizens in future.