

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

For further information contact:

Video Conference via Zoom

Rhys Morgan

Meeting date: 24 January 2022

Committee Clerk

Meeting time: 13.30

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Private pre-meeting and registration (13.00 – 13.30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(13:30)

2 Draft Budget 2022–23: scrutiny session with the Minister for Social Justice

(13:30–15:00)

(Pages 1 – 54)

Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice

Hannah Blythyn, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

Claire Bennett, Director, Communities & Tackling Poverty

Karin Phillips, Deputy Director Community Safety Division

Sian Gill, Head of Financial Reporting

3 Papers to note

(15:00–15:05)

3.1 Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice regarding European Union Settlement Scheme – 26 November 2021

(Pages 55 – 57)

3.2 Correspondence from the Children's Commissioner for Wales regarding Budget scrutiny 2022–23 – 14 January 2022

(Pages 58 – 64)



- 3.3 Children’s Commissioner for Wales Budget estimate 2022–23 – 14 January 2022**
(Pages 65 – 73)
- 3.4 Correspondence to the Minister for Social Justice regarding women's residential centres – 21 December**
(Page 74)
- 3.5 Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice regarding regarding the creation of a women’s residential centre – 18 January**
(Pages 75 – 76)
- 3.6 Correspondence to the First Minister regarding data justice – 21 December**
(Page 77)
- 3.7 Correspondence from the First Minister regarding data justice – 18 January**
(Pages 78 – 79)
- 3.8 Correspondence from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding the Inter–Institutional Relations Agreement – 21 December 2021**
(Pages 80 – 81)
- 4 Motion under SO17.42 (iv) and (ix) to exclude the public from the remainder of today's meeting**
- 5 Draft Budget 2022–23: consideration of evidence**
(15:05–15:40)
- Break (15:40 –15:50)**
- 6 EU Settlement Scheme monitoring**
(15:50–16:10) (Pages 82 – 96)
- 7 Committee timetable review: consideration of draft response to the Llywydd**
(16:10–16:25)

Document is Restricted

Equality and Social Justice Committee

Date: 24 January 2022

Title: Scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget 2022-23

Introduction

The Draft Budget includes spending plans for 2022-23 to 2024-25. This paper provides evidence to the Committee on the future programme budget proposals in relation to the Social Justice MEG as outlined in the Draft Budget which was laid on 20 December 2021.

Annex A provides a breakdown of the 2022-23 Social Justice Main Expenditure Group (MEG) allocations by Spending Programme Area, Action and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL).

Annex B provides commentary on each of the Actions within the MEG, including an analysis and explanation of changes between the Draft Budget 2022-23 and the First Supplementary Budget 2021-22 (June 2021).

Financial Tables

Detailed information in relation to individual BELs are provided in Annexes A and B. The table below provides an overview of the changes to MEG budgets between Final Budget 2021-22 and Draft Budget 2022-23.

	2021-22 Final Budget £'000	2022-23 Draft Budget £'000	Change £'000	% Change	2023-24 Draft Budget £'000	2024-25 Draft Budget £'000
Revenue	101,677	110,177	8,500	8.4%	122,177	125,177
Non Cash	169	178	9	5.3%	178	178
Total Resource	101,846	110,355	8,509	8.4%	122,355	125,355
Total Capital	16,887	17,000	113	0.7%	17,000	17,000

Budget processes

We have undertaken the first multi-year spending review since 2015, this budget has a future that is stronger, fairer and greener at its heart. To inform the allocation of multi-year revenue budgets we undertook a new review process to align spending to the new Programme for Government. We have sought to take an integrated approach to better understand the intersectional and unintended impacts of spending to maximise the impact of available funding.

This budget outlines how we will continue to respond to the devastating impacts of the pandemic in widening inequalities and continue to target our financial levers where they can have the greatest impact to tackle socio-economic disadvantage. The current context has also highlighted a range of structural inequalities that existed prior to the pandemic which the funding we have outlined has been targeted to address. Tackling

poverty was one of the cross-Government themes which informed the preparation of the budget, with shared priorities discussed with Ministers.

The integrated approach has also been maintained in assessing the impact of our spending decisions that underpins the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of our Budget. This approach allows us to understand how we can target funding to deliver better outcomes through understanding how different needs and areas of impact intersect, particularly for those with protected characteristics, while at the same time seeking to understand and mitigate against unintended impacts.

For this 2022-23 Draft Budget, we have included details of the impacts of spending decisions as part of the main narrative in chapters four and six with the economic and financial contexts outlined in both the Chief Economist's report and chapter two of the budget narrative.

Within my own portfolio, I have made a number of allocations that aim to tackle poverty and inequalities. These include allocations to the Discretionary Assistance Fund, the Basic Income Pilot and the Income Maximisation Scheme as well as allocations to the Equality and Community Cohesion budget to support a number of activities which aim to reduce inequalities. Details of these allocations are provided in later sections of this paper.

COVID-19 allocations

During 2020-21 and 2021-22 the Welsh Government has made allocations from reserves specifically to tackle the impacts of Covid-19. The UK Government has not provided any Covid-19 related allocations as part of our 2022-23 settlement and as such no further Covid-19 allocations have been made as part of this Draft Budget.

It is clear that inequalities have been exacerbated by this pandemic and these inequalities will persist into the next financial year and beyond. As a Government, we have made allocations to alleviate these inequalities with additional support provided for free school meals, the Childcare Offer, Flying Start and for homelessness services among others.

Within my portfolio, I have made allocations to tackle socio economic inequalities to tackle poverty through the Discretionary Assistance Fund by piloting a Basic Income Pilot and to provide support for Income Maximisations Services. I have made broader allocations to tackle other equalities through the Equality and Community Cohesion BEL. This will provide support for the implementation of the Race Equality Action Plan; Race Disparity Unit; Disability Rights Taskforce; the implementation of the LGBTQI+ Action plan for Wales and a review and implementation of the Advancing Gender Equality Action Plan.

To tackle Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, I have also made a further allocation to support our new Strategy and Blueprint approach alongside our capital investment programme. Further details are provided below in respect of these allocations.

We have also built on the actions we took within our 2021-22 Budget and continued to reflect the need to prevent harm to the most disadvantaged and prevent wider negative impacts on the people of Wales and the wider economy as a result of the pandemic by

protecting health and jobs, building a greener future and to create a Fairer Wales through tackling inequality in all of its forms.

No specific Covid-19 allocations were made as part of this Draft Budget, although all allocations will be based on need and that will have taken into consideration continuing impacts of the pandemic. For example, funding has been allocated to support the Disability Rights Taskforce and work to deliver our response to the 'Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond Covid-19' Report.

Also in understanding that the pandemic will continue to have financial impacts on our most vulnerable citizens, we anticipate that demand for the Discretionary Assistance Fund is unlikely to return to pre-Covid levels and as a result have allocated an additional £7m to this budget's pre-Covid baseline.

The Third Sector Resilience Fund (TSRF) third round which operated in 2021-22 was designed to not only help organisations to survive through the ongoing pandemic, but also to help them to adapt to become more resilient in the future. The ongoing legacy of the TSRF is that third sector organisations benefiting from the funding will be more sustainable. Welsh Government is now encouraging departments to offer multi-year grant awards. These enable organisations to better plan staffing and resources to help respond to the needs of their beneficiaries

Advancing Human Rights

The allocations within the Equality and Community Cohesion BEL will enable us to progress our human rights commitments in the extended Programme for Government. Further scoping work is underway to confirm the scope, scale and timing of next steps.

This work is being undertaken in partnership with the Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights Steering Group. It is anticipated that any legislation will be for the latter part of this Senedd term. Any legislation will be consulted on and supported by a thorough assessment of any associated costs.

Equality and Inclusion Programme funding

The current Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme will come to an end on 31 March 2022. The programme was developed to support Welsh Government's Equality Objectives 2016-20 and has seven main strands relating to race; disability; LGBTQI+; gender; Gypsies, Roma & Travellers; Hate Crime; and Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

Work to develop a new programme has been progressing. My officials consulted on the future of this programme at the start of 2021. On 28 September I issued a [Written Statement](#) about the outcome of the consultation, which highlighted broad support for our aims and principles, but also the need for more engagement with stakeholders to enable us to achieve them.

We have held two independently facilitated meetings with partners in November and December to co-construct the new programme. Through this process, we have identified core support which will be established from April 2021 and further areas which will be developed in partnership during the first part of 2022/23.

Well-Being of Future Generations

Wales is unique in having made a promise that we will protect the interests of future generations as well as meeting the challenges of the present day. The initial Programme for Government published in June 2021 set out the 10 well-being objectives we are working towards this term, as well as outlining the steps we are taking to deliver these goals. Delivering these objectives will maximise our contribution to the well-being goals. This revised and extended Programme for Government maintains our commitment to these 10 well-being objectives.

These objectives will allow us to deliver a more prosperous, more equal and greener Wales in line with the sustainable development principle, addressing the extraordinary challenges Wales's faces and creating a sustainable foundation for future generations to build on. Our commitment to these objectives is unchanged.

This Budget is the first of this Senedd term and has been developed to underpin the commitments made within the Programme for Government to build a Stronger, Fairer and a Greener Wales. As outlined in Chapter 4 the allocations contained within this Draft Budget are aligned with Welsh Government's well-being objectives which lie at the heart of the Programme for Government to maximise the impacts of available funding aligned to the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

As part of the 2020-21 Budget, we published a Budget Improvement Plan for the first time. The Plan outlined our vision, including short and medium-term ambitions over the next five years, to improve the budget process using the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG Act) and the five ways of working to drive continuous improvement.

We have committed to publishing the Plan annually to recognise the ongoing nature of driving and sustaining longer term change. Our overall aim is that these planned improvements to the budget process will result in greater transparency in the annual Budget documentation to demonstrate how the Act has influenced budget decisions. This updated Plan continues to show how we have built, or plan to build, on this work in future years, including the measures we have undertaken during the current budget cycle.

Our budget allocations will enable us to deliver our well-being objectives and help us maximise our contribution to the well-being goals.

Community Support Officers

The Programme for Government 2021-2026 made a commitment to maintain the funding of 500 Police Community Support officers and increase this number by a 100. Based on the 2021-22 costs of employing an additional 100 officers, we have allocated £3.7m in 2022-23 to fund this commitment.

The Welsh Government is committed to help keep communities safe. Integral to Neighbourhood Policing Teams, PCSOs are the eyes and ears of their communities. They take a problem solving preventative approach to addressing issues within their local areas. The additional PCSOs will work within communities providing support to the most vulnerable and working with them, finding solutions on the ground for issues such as anti-social behaviour.

Basic Income Pilot

The budget contains an allocation to enable the delivery of a pilot for a basic income scheme in Wales for a cohort of young people leaving care. This commitment is an extension of the social wage and the model of progressive universalism that the Welsh Government has followed for over 20 years.

I have allocated £5m in 2022-23 and a further £5m in 2023-24 to meet the costs of this pilot. In 2024-25, the costs of the pilot are expected to reduce to £5m and therefore £5m from the previous year's baseline has been reallocated to other priorities within the MEG.

The purpose of the pilot is to ensure young people in the pilot get all the support they need to give them the best possible chance to make their way in life and the transition out of care better, easier and more positive. A Basic Income pilot supports the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to promote 'A Wales of cohesive communities' and 'A More Equal Wales'.

Subject to the resolution of remaining practical matters, including the interface of our Basic Income Payments with the benefit system, I plan to introduce the pilot in the financial year beginning 1 April 2022.

The pilot will be accompanied by a dynamic evaluation which will allow us to learn what is working for the participants, and what isn't, as we progress. I hope that by the end of this pilot we will be able to produce a set of recommendations which will be relevant to both care leavers and other groups who could potentially benefit. I also hope that the pilot will offer real-world deliverable ideas for financial wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and pathways to education and employment.

Discretionary Assistance Fund

With individuals continuing to be affected by the pressures of Covid-19, individuals and families across Wales are turning to the Fund for additional support to help them with some of the financial pressures and challenges they are facing. As a result I have allocated an additional £7m revenue in 2022-23 which will be baselined throughout the budget period and will enable me to continue to support this ongoing demand to the fund.

Continuing to provide funding for the DAF contributes to the national well-being goals, including:

- A resilient Wales – the DAF is now referring its most vulnerable applicants to the Single Advice Fund (SAF), which provides advice on income maximisation, ensuring individuals are receiving the benefit support they are entitled to, and also debt advice. This promotes longer term financial stability for these individuals.
- A more equal Wales – the DAF provides support for vulnerable individuals to provide food, gas and electric in situations where they would otherwise be unable to.

Advice Services

Investing in advice and income maximisation services tackles inequality and promotes social justice for all. As a result I have allocated £1.7m from 2023-24 to expand the Single Advice Fund and complementary income maximisation activities. The funding will increase welfare benefit and debt advisor capacity within the Single Advice Fund and enable the delivery of a range of national and local awareness raising initiatives.

Advice service outcomes support several of the national well-being goals, including a prosperous Wales by helping people to maximise their income and build their financial resilience and a healthier Wales through reducing the stress generated by unsolved social welfare problems.

Welsh Government's spending decisions on advice services is founded upon the five ways of working (sustainable development principle). Through the Single Advice Fund, grant funding has been awarded to advice consortia who embraced Welsh Government's ambition for collaborative delivery models that resolve a person's social welfare problem and offers them access to services that build their capability, developing their resilience to future social welfare problems occurring.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

I have allocated £3m in 2024-25 towards the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The Supporting Communities budget line will also continue to provide £1m revenue funding to support food banks.

Under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, Welsh Ministers have a statutory duty to develop and publish a child poverty strategy and set objectives for tackling child poverty. The current strategy was published in 2015. I am committed to refreshing the Child Poverty Strategy so that it better reflects the issues Wales is currently facing and the options available to us.

In doing so, I will build on the findings from the Child Poverty Review and more recently the WCPP work, helping develop a more coherent framework for tackling poverty in Wales and help to maximise the impact of cross-Government interventions and ensure accountability. It will also include undertaking meaningful community engagement with children, young people and their families (as well as frontline workers with experience of working with families) with lived experience of poverty.

Equalities and Community Cohesion

Revenue allocations to the Equalities and Community Cohesion BEL of £4.6m revenue in 2022-23, £9.5m in 2023-24 and £12.7m in 2024-25 towards the Race Equality Action Plan and other activities will contribute to the Welsh Government's commitment to advance and strengthen equality and human rights, improving outcomes for people and contributing to a more equal Wales.

This will be achieved through funding actions arising from the Race Equality Action Plan, the Disability Rights Taskforce, the LGBTQI+ Action plan and commitments to further embed Period Dignity. There is a commitment to introduce legislation to incorporate specific UN Conventions into Welsh Law as well as taking specific actions in relation to legislation around Banning Conversion Therapy and devolution of the Gender Recognition Act.

The terrible fact that six out of ten deaths related to Covid 19 across the UK were disabled people led to the commissioning of research by the Welsh Government's Disability Equality Forum.

The allocation, as noted above, will also enable support for the Disability Rights Taskforce and subsequent implementation of actions arising from its work, as well as the implementation LGBTQI+ Action Plan and further work to promote gender equality.

Race Equality Action Plan

The Covid Pandemic has brought into sharp relief where the deepest inequalities in society lie. Significant work has been undertaken, in collaboration with stakeholders and delivery partners, to identify what actions are needed to address these. At the outset of the pandemic a concerning picture emerged around the impacts of Covid on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. The Welsh Government quickly established Advisory groups and subsequently brought forward the development of a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales. The plan sets out how Welsh government will achieve the First Minister's pledge to achieve an Anti-Racist Wales by 2030.

Whilst many of the actions that are contained within the Race Equality Action Plan will sit within the portfolios of other Ministers, I have made allocations within my MEG to ensure we can establish accountability mechanisms (including the Accountability Group), deliver key actions around Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and homes, support individuals and groups working with communities and supporting across Government to ensure policymakers can access lived experience on an equitable basis.

I will also establish a Race Disparity Unit as part of the Equality and Data Evidence Unit to guide our work and ensure we are developing interventions with the most significant positive impact.

Equality Evidence and Data Units

To inform policy development, strategic and budgetary planning and the development of targeted interventions to address areas of deepening inequality I will establish an Equality and Data Evidence Unit. This will comprise of units focused specifically on race, disability and equality impacts. The Units will also ensure more effective evaluation of the impact of policies and decisions.

Recruitment to the units will begin in Year 1 (2021-22) with an allocation of £1.695m with capacity and capability increasing over the subsequent years.

Support for the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering

The pandemic has shown the importance of the third sector and the role it will play in ensuring that our recovery is fair and just. The WCVA and the 19 county voluntary councils across Wales provide the support infrastructure that ensures the third sector is well governed, resilient and sustainable.

The voluntary sector in Wales works with many of our most vulnerable people and communities. It is trusted in a way that the public sector is not. It can reach people the public sector cannot and so ensure that they get access to the services they need.

The sector has played a vital part in supporting communities through the pandemic, into recovery and beyond.

The programme for government commits us to continuing our strong partnership with voluntary organisations across the range of our responsibilities. As a result, the Third Sector budget will increase to £9.294m in 2024-25 following an allocation of £1.8m.

This three year budget allocation allows Welsh Government to offer multi-year grant awards, enabling organisations to better use resources, develop partnerships and partnership working over the longer term. This collaboration will lead to better integrated service provision which in turn will allow earlier interventions and preventative activity.

Third sector organisations work across Wales using their infrastructure to support the volunteers they recruit and mobilise to deliver against many of our policies and priorities such as those contained in the Race Equality Action Plan. These organisations also make their contribution to the national well-being goals.

- Voluntary organisations working in the health and social care sector – alongside the NHS and local government contribute to better physical and mental health outcomes. (a healthier Wales)
- Access to help and advice from voluntary sector organisations from food-banks to educational charities contribute to better outcomes for children and families. (a more equal Wales)
- Voluntary sector organisations supporting minority ethnic groups, disabled people, and the LGBTQI+ community help to empower people. (A Wales of cohesive communities).
- Employment programmes operated by the third sector can sometimes reach those furthest away from the jobs market. (A more prosperous Wales).

Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

I have allocated a further £1.050m revenue in 2022-23 baselined into future years and £2.1m capital in each of the three years to address issues of Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Both the VAWDASV capital and revenue funding supports our statutory duty under the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) (Wales) Act 2015 to eliminate all forms of VAWDASV in Wales. Under Section 3 of the VAWDASV Act 2015 Welsh Ministers must prepare and publish a National Strategy which sets out objectives and actions to achieve the purposes of the Act: prevention, protection and support of VAWDASV in Wales. The intended effects of the VAWDASV Strategy 2022-2026 are to permanently change the culture and response to VAWDASV, improve support for victims and their children and to prevent offending and reoffending.

In developing the draft Strategy, we have considered the national well-being goals and continued to apply the sustainable development principle (five ways of working). The draft Strategy contributes to:

- A prosperous Wales through reducing the negative economic impact often associated with being a VAWDASV survivor;
- A healthier Wales through improving the physical and mental well-being of VAWDASV survivors and their families;
- A more equal Wales through ensuring VAWDASV survivors have support to encourage them to fulfil their potential;

- A Wales of cohesive communities through awareness raising around VAWDASV and encouraging everyone to acknowledge that VAWDASV is not acceptable; and
- A globally responsible Wales through the development of a central repository to collate VAWDASV-related data and research, with the aim of learning from good practice.

Social Partnerships

The Social Partnership and Fair Work allocation of £0.238m in 2022-23, £0.435m in 2023-24 and 2024-25 will support the introduction and effective implementation of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill and further progress in delivering the Fair Work Commission recommendations for increasing the prevalence of fair work.

The Bill will establish a statutory Social Partnership Council and introduce new duties in relation to social partnership, socially responsible procurement and the promotion of fair work. The additional funding allocation will support a range of activity to ensure effective implementation, including the development of statutory and non-statutory guidance; the roll-out of training sessions and webinars; communications activity and the development of case studies, tools and resources.

In particular, the allocation will support our ability to engage effectively with social partners; scale up interventions to encourage real living wage adoption and accreditation; improve the diffusion of information, advice and guidance to individuals on their rights at work; communicate the social and economic benefits of social partnership and fair work; and enhance our contribution to tackling modern slavery and extreme forms of labour exploitation.

Progressing the Fair Work Commission recommendations requires the development and delivery of wide ranging actions to increase the availability of and access to fair work. This funding will support our ability to scale up interventions to encourage real living wage adoption and accreditation; the diffusion of information, advice and guidance to individuals on their rights at work; the communication of the social and economic benefits of fair work; the promotion of access to trade unions as well as enhance our contribution to tackling modern slavery and extreme forms of labour exploitation.

Formal reporting requirements in relation to social partnership, socially responsible procurement and fair work will be introduced and will provide transparency in relation to the progress made and the outcomes achieved. Intended outcomes include strengthened social partnership working that informs better policy-making and wider impact; an improvement in the experience of work in Wales which will help make Wales a more appealing place to live and work; and improving the ability of public procurement to deliver genuine social value for people and communities in Wales.

Public Bodies / Public Appointments

All regulated public appointments in Wales include reference in the application pack sent to all candidates to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the responsibilities those bodies subject to the Act have in relation to that Act.

The Future Generations Commissioner is a member of the Public Leaders Forum in Wales and is a regular contributor to the discussions held at that Forum, as well as a regular presenter on aspects of public bodies' responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Community Bank Allocation

The Welsh Governments policy development and private sector delivery of a Community Bank for Wales are developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle. I have allocated capital of £1.5m capital for years 2022-23 and 2023-24, with £1.75m allocated for 2024-25 to support the delivery of the Bank. The proposed delivery of the Community Bank of Wales by the existing private sector financial institution has been 'impact assessed'.

A Community Bank for Wales will support the application of the sustainable development principle (five ways of working) as follows:

Long term - The Community Bank would address an immediate and on-going withdrawal of the retail banks from Welsh high streets. By establishing fixed financial relations with individuals and micro-businesses, it would engender longer-term thinking and planning, based on local priorities.

Prevention - The Community Bank would help prevent the decline of local communities in Wales by mitigating the impacts of other banks branch closures.

Integration - The Community Bank has committed to work alongside the Welsh Government on many of its economic initiatives including 'Town Centre First' and 'Economic Hubs' and are to sign up to the economic contract.

Collaboration - The Community Bank plans to work across the Welsh financial ecosystem, collaborating and partnering with local authorities, town/community councils, credit unions and other mutually-owned entities.

Involvement - The provisions of mutuality (1 member – 1 vote) are at the heart of the Community Bank. The use of Member Forums are central to the bank's mission to be member-led. It will provide focus on financial well-being of members as part of delivery to enable members to thrive.

Community Facilities Programme

The Community Facilities Programme (CFP) has a budget of £6.5m in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. The CFP is a capital grant programme which provides grants for the improvement of well used and much needed community facilities – land and buildings. The CFP can also be used to help communities take ownership of these facilities.

The CFP helps communities to be greener. It provides grants to help with energy efficient heating, lighting, windows and doors or new technology such as solar panels. Fit for purpose community facilities mean that local people can access services within their communities, meaning they do not have to travel outside as often.

Community facilities contribute towards the national well-being goals as follows:

- Community facilities provide an inclusive environment for the community to get together and socialise. They are a focus for community activity. (a Wales of cohesive communities)
- Community facilities help to prevent loneliness and isolation and can provide access to support losing weight, stopping smoking or exercise. (a healthier Wales)
- Community Facilities provide volunteering opportunities, local jobs and training opportunities (a more equal Wales).

Fire & Rescue Services

£0.9m capital has been allocated in each of the three years for equipment to support the three Fire and Rescue Services' Safe and Well visits to the homes of our most 'at risk' citizens. It will fund complex fire safety equipment to prevent fires and other hazards from occurring, allowing these vulnerable citizens to live safely and independently in their own homes. This programme contributes to the objectives of promoting good health and wellbeing and building healthier communities and more resilient environments in which to live.

Gypsy Traveller Sites

The Race Equality Action Plan is a key element in both the extended Programme for Government. The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Allocation of £3.7m for 2022-23, £3.2m for 23-24 and £3.4m for 2024-25 provides the capital investment to deliver more and improved culturally-appropriate accommodation.

Since we created the duty to identify and meet the need for appropriate accommodation within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 we have seen well over two hundred new pitches either created, or refurbished, many on small, privately-owned family sites.

There is a shortfall of some 100 Gypsy and Traveller permanent residential pitches across Wales as well as an established need for transit provision. This investment area supports our Local Authorities to deliver their statutory obligations to provide appropriate accommodation, as well as supporting the development of sustainable access to appropriate utilities and services for Gypsies and Travellers living on residential sites in Wales.

During consultation on the Race Equality Action Plan we heard powerful evidence from Gypsies and Travellers about the barriers to new public and private pitches and about the need to use the knowledge and expertise of residents more effectively. The revised Race Equality Action Plan will commit to using capital allocations in more innovative ways, supported with revenue activity to revise guidance on the design and management of public sites, with support for those seeking to develop their own family sites.

Supporting Communities

Following the end of European Transition Funding, we will maintain the £1m revenue funding in our revenue baseline which will build on funding provided in the previous three years to support an increased number of people facing food poverty. It will

support the strengthening community food initiatives across all local authorities in Wales, including a focus on activity that helps to address the root causes of food poverty.

The capital funding of £1m annually, will support organisations to boost their capacity to provide good quality, nutritious food to their customers. The revenue funding will be used in a variety of ways to suit the requirements of each authority area including, but not limited to, the development of projects such as social supermarkets, community cafes, lunch clubs and community cookery classes. There will be a focus on initiatives which help build community resilience and tackle the root causes of food poverty, such as the development of community hubs which co-locate a range of support services such as debt and housing advice, holiday hunger schemes, community cafes, social enterprises and advice services, built around community food provision.

Funding can also be used to address food insecurity, for example, through the development and strengthening of food partnerships with a view to creating healthy, sustainable local food systems.

Review of the bodies subject to the well-being duty

The financial implications of extending the list of public bodies under Section 6 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 will be assessed as part of a Regulatory Impact Assessment. Given the need to engage with all affected parties, and understand the implications on the additional public bodies, we intend to conclude the review by summer 2022.

Future Generations Commissioner

The Welsh Government received the Future Generations Commissioner's Budget Estimate for 2022-23 on 29 October 2021. It was a needs-based budget application, and is currently being considered by officials who will advise the Minister for Social Justice on it by mid-January 2022.

Poverty and gender inequality

In 2022 we will publish the findings of research undertaken by the Covid-19 Evidence Centre which will assist in work to refresh and re-prioritise actions within the Gender Equality Action Plan in order to address and mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on gender equality.

A number of allocations have been made through this Draft Budget specifically to tackle issues of women's poverty. Within my own portfolio, the period dignity grant fund will continue to be offered to local authorities in order to support our Programme for Government commitments to embed period dignity in schools and expand our period provision in communities and the private sector. Moreover, we have commissioned a process evaluation to ensure that future funding is directed most effectively in order to reach under-served communities. Our Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan, published for consultation in October 2021, outlines how we will expand our work on period dignity across communities.

The delivery of Chwarae Teg's core funding will, where possible, be aligned to the refresh of the Employability and Entrepreneurship plan. Chwarae Teg have undertaken research relating to the impact of COVID 19 on women, and those women specifically with caring responsibilities, as they have been adversely affected. Chwarae Teg work with a range of officials across Welsh Government in a variety of areas to provide advice, support and guidance on how the recommendations from the Gender Equality Review can be implemented.

In total we will be investing an additional £50m in support for children, families and childcare over the first year of this budget, with further allocations in future years. This underlines our commitment to ensuring we give every child the best start in life. In the coming year we will be investing an initial £3.5m in expanding the Childcare Offer as part of our commitment to support more parents in training and education with childcare costs. We will also be working with key partners across the childcare and play sector, and within local government, on plans to increase early year's provision for 2 year olds to be funded via the Children and Communities Grant. This investment, and these commitments, recognise both the importance of high quality early education and care provision for children's development, and the critical role access to affordable childcare plays in supporting parents, particularly mothers, into work.

Evidence shows the majority of social care workers are women aged over 40, who are not financially independent despite being in full time work. Delivering improved pay through the introduction of the Real Living Wage will help to address low pay associated with the sector and increase the attractiveness of social care work. This delivers not only improvements for social care workforce, but improved workforce retention and outcomes for people receiving care and support. These actions will help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage through having positive impacts on those on lower incomes, and this will form part of more detailed impact assessment considerations and evaluation.

The Social Care Fair Work Forum is considering how to improve working conditions for social care workers across Wales. Equality and inclusion is core to the definition of Fair Work in Wales and these considerations will underpin the Forum's work. The Written Statement by the Minister for Health and Social Care confirmed the steps being taken to deliver the Real Living Wage for social care workers during 2022-2023. Funding for this and in recognition of the wider pressures on social care services is being provided through the increased local government un-hypothecated settlement.

A major component of the delivery of care and support in Wales is provided by unpaid carers, often family and friends. Evidence from the Family Resource Survey (FRS) of gender inequality in the provision of unpaid care shows that women aged 55-64 years are most likely to be carers and more likely than men to provide informal care across all age groups, except for age group 85 and older. Previous research has shown that women in their fifties are more likely to leave the labour market to provide unpaid care for family members than men. The fact that women are more likely to provide care means that they are more likely to face adverse employment effects associated with caring i.e. lower earnings and leaving the labour market. Similarly, the 2011 census showed that women make up the majority of unpaid carers – 57% of carers in Wales are women and women of working age (25 to 64) are significantly more likely than men to be providing unpaid care to someone with a disability or illness or who is older. As such, the Welsh Government is investing funding in support for unpaid carers in relation to a number of areas such as the provision of short breaks and respite and development of a young carer's ID card. This work sits alongside ongoing investment of circa £1m in

support for carers through local health boards, relevant projects under the Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant, and support via Regional Partnership Boards.

Working Wales is the Welsh Government's approach to delivering free, impartial, employability and careers advice tailored to an individual's needs and circumstances. The service, delivered by Careers Wales, provides professional careers information, advice and guidance for individuals aged 16 and over, by undertaking a needs-based assessment, including barriers to employment, and referring the individual to appropriate support. The service provides a national entry point to employability support, which supports and complements existing channels. This is available to women.

The Wales Union Learning Fund is delivered through 18 Union projects and support for learning is available to the workforce in Unionised workplaces. The projects have responded positively to the Covid 19 pandemic by shifting learning from a face to face environment to on-line learning which over time has resulted in an increased uptake in learning. In some workplaces, face to face learning is beginning to return. We are currently in the process of assessing bids in order to award funding to Unions to run the new programme of delivery which will commence in April 2022. It has a strong focus on equality issues including gender equality.

A skills competition provides an opportunity for individuals or teams to compete against one another to demonstrate their talent in a particular vocational skill, using tasks derived from real life, industry-based scenarios. Each individual's work is scored by experts to an agreed criteria, and the highest score(s) go through to the next stage of the competition. Competitions operate across Wales, up to UK and international level. The Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales project uses skills competition as a way of evolving to inspire and elevate young people's aspirations to achieve excellence. This includes breaking down gender segregation issues.

As part of the work to grow apprenticeships we will be giving consideration as to how to target under-represented groups to work in the sector, for example this could be through ring-fencing degree apprenticeships for only under-represented groups or through targeted awareness raising as part of communications. Research specifications will also include data gathering relating to equality and inclusion. There is also an interface between learning on apprenticeships programmes and the Race Equality Action Plan social care goals relating to access for workers and better outcomes for people. An integrated impact assessment will be undertaken on the work and this will consider in further detail impacts on the basis of intersectionality as well as opportunities to promote equality and inclusion.

Women's experience in the criminal justice system

In 2021-22, an additional allocation of £0.5m was made to take forward the work of the Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints, increasing the budget to £1.075m which has been baselined into 2022-23.

The additional funding has enabled the continued support of the Women's Pathfinder Whole System Approach and 18-25 Early Intervention Service, which aims to improve outcomes for women coming into contact with the criminal justice system in Wales, by delivering a women specific, multi-agency, integrated package of support.

Welsh Government are also co-funding the 'Visiting Mum's' project with the HM Prisons & Probation Service, which will help strengthen and maintain links between Welsh women in the secure estate and their children.

The equalities implications of the use of data and data justice

Welsh Government recognises that investing in robust evidence can support the targeted and appropriate use of resources to tackle inequality and promote social justice for all. The Welsh Government have committed to create a Race Disparity Unit and a Disability Disparity Unit alongside an Equality Data Unit to ensure an inclusive evidence base to inform decision making in government and across the Public Sector. The Units will work to improve the coherence, consistency, use and availability of equalities evidence on Wales. The work will also enable Welsh Government to address the National Statistician's Inclusive Data Task Force recommendations at a Wales-level. Both Units will be funded from the allocation made to the Equality and Community Cohesion BEL.

Domestic violence and the safety of women in public places

The Draft Budget allocation for VAWDASV 22-23 is £7.875m revenue, an increase of £1.050m from 2021-22 baseline, and £2.2m capital funding. Grant funding contributes to all of the VAWDASV National Strategy objectives and meets Welsh Government commitment on carrying out the purposes of the VAWDASV Act 2015.

We have made a commitment through the Programme for Government to *Strengthen the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy to include a focus on violence against women in the street and workplace as well as the home.* Intended outcomes are for Wales to be the safest place for a woman or girl, and that no-one should suffer or die from domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The strategy will be to:

- change public attitudes to VAWDASV through awareness raising;
- Increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships;
- Increased focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending;
- Make early intervention and prevention a priority;
- Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors; and,
- Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, inter-sectional and responsive services across Wales.

Our Programme for Government also commits us to *"Expand the 'Ask and Act' and 'Don't be a Bystander' training and awareness campaigns"*. As per the VAWDASV Act 2015, there is a statutory requirement to train relevant authorities and professionals fulfilled through Welsh Government's Ask and Act training framework.

Prevention lies at the heart of the National Strategy of which the expansion of 'Don't be a Bystander' awareness raising campaign is a key deliverable, more specifically outcomes will be to ensure:

- Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors; and,
- Change public attitudes to VAWDASV through awareness raising.

Immigration and European Citizens' Rights under the terms of UK withdrawal from the EU

In recent years, we have provided funding to a range of organisations to ensure EU Citizens could receive the advice and support they need to apply for Settled Status and address any inequalities they may be experiencing in Wales. In 2021-22 this included £600k for the EU Citizens Rights project (which provided funding to Citizens Advice Cymru, Settled and included training and communications costs) and £174k for Newfield's Law to provide complex legal advice for appeals.

The UK Government's Settled Status scheme ended on 30 June 2021 but we have continued to provide funding to these organisations until the end of March 2022 to resolve issues arising and support late applications to the scheme. We are currently considering what the most appropriate level of required funding will be beyond March 2022 but we anticipate reductions in the level of support provided.

The EU Citizens Rights Project will end on 31 March 2022 but we think some continued support for EU Citizens will remain. We anticipate this will cost approximately £200-250k in 2022-23.

The support for EU Citizens in 2022-23 is set against other emerging migration support needs which have been identified. Since 2019, we have been able to draw in funding from the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) for our ReStart: Refugee Integration project but this will end on 31 March 2022. The ReStart project has been crucial in ensuring the operation of 'ESOL Hubs' in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham. These Hubs perform a vital role in ensuring everyone who comes to Wales can acquire language skills as quickly as possible to support integration. Due to the loss of AMIF (as a result of EU Withdrawal) we will need to explore whether ESOL Hubs can continue to be funded through Welsh Government budgets.

Additionally, Wales is now home for a number of Afghan and Hong Kong families due to recent UK Government visa and resettlement pathways which have been established. We are anticipating that an additional £2.3m will be made available as part of a future Supplementary Estimate though this has yet to be confirmed. We will then be seeking to utilise this as part of our work in this area.

Health inequalities, healthy life expectancy and lifestyle

Current measures to address health inequalities are embedded across all activity both as part of the strategic planning required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the 2015 Act') and through our 'health in all policies' approach (supported by the Health Impact Assessment ('HIA') process). Consequently it is not possible to disaggregate the specific budget which is allocated to tackling health inequalities from the totality of government spending. However, specific examples of government spending which contribute greatly to tackling health inequalities include interventions such as the Welsh Government's Flying Start Programme which has

received an uplift through the Children and Communities Grant in the Finance and Local Government MEG.

The 2015 Act continues to be an important driver guiding our Budget considerations and we have continued to embed the 2015 Act's five ways of working in our approach and the processes that support it. We have over recent years taken an integrated approach to impact assessments, which includes consideration of children's rights, reflecting their protected characteristics under the Equality Act, as well as taking into account the impact of decisions and policies on social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being, as set out within 2015 Act, as well as sustainability and the Welsh Language. Further details on our approach to assessing impacts will be available alongside the Draft Budget to be published on 20 December.

Our experience in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the costs of tolerating health inequalities in our communities in the disproportionate impact we have seen of the pandemic on the less well off in Wales. This experience has highlighted the importance of tackling the causes of these inequalities with renewed urgency and heightened ambition. As such, we are continuing our focus on prevention and early intervention. We have maintained the £7.2m allocated for Prevention and Early Years funding and will be shifting its focus to ensure it is targeted towards the two leading causes of avoidable death in Wales: obesity and smoking. Using this funding, we will support projects across Local Health Boards which:

- in conjunction with Public Health Wales, support the rollout of inpatient smoking cessation support in all Local Health Boards;
- support a reduction in the number of people smoking in pregnancy and support cessation;
- support prevention work in the obesity and overweight space, in line with the Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy and meeting existing population health measures.

Alongside this work, as referenced above, continued investment in interventions such as Flying Start contribute greatly to the prevention and early intervention agenda through making a decisive difference to the life chances of children in the crucial early years phase in the areas which it runs.

Good quality and affordable housing

Good quality and affordable housing positively impacts on physical and mental health, education, employment and indeed every aspect of a person's life. This is why Wales has never moved away from its support for social housing. The Minister for Climate Change has made significant allocations through the Climate Change MEG to meet housing needs.

Living well in a quality home brings a wide range of benefits to health, learning and prosperity supporting the government's wider agenda for improving outcomes in health and wellbeing and educational attainment as well as on poverty and decarbonisation. Good quality housing impacts positively on health and wellbeing, helping reduce pressures on health and other public services. For example, investing in improving energy efficiency in new and existing housing can help to reduce fuel poverty and reliance on benefits, with every £1.00 spent on energy efficiency estimated to save around 0.42p in health costs.

Poor quality or overcrowded housing can have a detrimental impact on children and young people in terms of physical and mental wellbeing and educational outcomes. Children living in acutely bad housing are also 20% more likely to attend hospital A&E departments than other children.

Investment in housing delivers good social, economic, environmental and wellbeing outcomes for people and communities in Wales, creating homes and places to support vibrant communities where people can live well. Delivering high-quality, warm, secure and energy-efficient homes for people who need them most, helps reduce the negative impacts of poor quality or unaffordable housing and fuel poverty. Whilst we know the causes of homelessness are complex, we know that at their root are issues of poverty and inequality. We know that social housing in Wales plays a key role in addressing homelessness, supporting some of our most vulnerable individuals, and that good quality accessible and affordable housing ensures people can sustain their tenancies and thrive. It can positively impact on health, mental health and education.

Additionally, investments in housing with care and adaptations puts in place primary prevention measures to mitigate the health, social and economic inequalities of some of the most vulnerable groups in society e.g. people in frail old age, people with dementia, children and adults with physical and learning disabilities, and children with complex and higher needs (physical, neurological and behavioural).

The Welsh Government also recognises the important role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need. The Minister for Climate Change has invested in programmes to increase access to and affordability of the private rented sector through a national leasing scheme which invests in property standards, links rents to benefit rates and offers longer term security and social landlord support and management. Additional investment has been made in discretionary housing payment budgets to ensure local authorities can support individuals and families to meet the costs of private rental.

Currently, £108m per annum is spent via Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) to support social landlords to provide good quality warm social homes, to some of Wales' most vulnerable households. 1.4m homes are responsible for 27% of all energy consumed in Wales and 15% of all our demand-side Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. The retrofitting of these homes is a primary preventative measure as it seeks to improve the energy efficiency of homes to reduce their carbon emissions to enable Welsh Ministers to meet legally binding carbon targets.

WHQS and the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) aim to maximise Welsh Government levers by focusing on social housing where there are significant financial levers that can be deployed to accelerate decarbonisation activity. We have begun to deliver these programme in social housing and the Private Rented Sector and Owner Occupier Sectors will follow. Investment in social housing decarbonisation retrofit will generate capacity and skills and develop approaches that other tenures can benefit from.

We are already working closely across Government departments to create appropriate programmes and policies for private tenures which compliment, rather than duplicate activity in social housing. This involves close working to remodel the warm homes programme, and develop a successor to ARBED which finishes this financial year. Investment in WHQS and optimised retrofit across Wales' housing must be seen against the backdrop of significant benefits to well-being, cost savings in services and local economic growth. Investment in over a million homes this decade has the potential to generate large economic returns as well as reducing our emissions and levels of fuel

poverty. The inclusion of low carbon within the 20,000 new social homes in the social sector enables us to ensure the homes built will be kinder to the climate, warm and affordable and help tackle fuel poverty.

Since 2010 to the end of March 2021, more than £394m has been invested to improve home energy efficiency through the Warm Homes Programme, benefitting more than 67,100 lower income households. These improvements are reducing the energy bills of lower income households by an average of more than £300 annually.

The Arbed 3 contract ended on 3 November 2021. Since April 2018, the Arbed 3 Scheme will have delivered domestic energy efficiency improvements to more than 4000 lower income households. Lower income households will continue to benefit from home energy efficiency improvements delivered through our Nest scheme. This will run until spring 2023. We are launching a consultation on the next iteration of the Warm Homes programme. The consultation will start not later than December 2021.

During 2020-21, Welsh Government invested £20.1m in the Nest scheme, with 90% of installations completed by Wales-based installers, including 23 apprentices working on the scheme. Nest provided 15,557 households with free, impartial advice and signposting to a range of support services. 4,559 of the 15,557 households received a package of free home energy efficiency measures such as a central heating system, a boiler or insulation. These improvements are estimated to have saved households an average £305 on their annual energy bills. Benefit entitlement checks resulted in a household average £2,091 potential increase in benefit take-up.

Additionally, combined Welsh Government and European investment of £15.7m in the Arbed scheme in 2020/21 resulted in 1,032 homes being improved through 22 schemes in 12 Local Authority areas installing 5,050 measures. These improvements are saving bill payers an average £327 on their annual energy bills.

The fuel poverty policy (and the plan to tackle fuel poverty) sits with the Minister for Social Justice, while domestic energy efficiency funding (which funds the Warm Homes Programme) sits with Minister for Climate Change.

Annex A

Resource Budget – SJ MEG by SPA, Action and BEL

BEL	2021-22 Final Budget £000's	Changes £000's	New Plans Draft Budget 2022-23 £000's
Financial Inclusion	23,702	-3,500	20,202
Digital Inclusion - Near Cash	1,250		1,250
Digital Inclusion - Non Cash	149		149
Supporting Communities	1,483		1,483
International Development	925		925
Social Partnerships	526	280	806
Basic Income	0	5,000	5,000
Total Supporting Communities Action	28,035	1,780	29,815
Total Supporting Communities SPA	28,035	1,780	29,815
Fire and Rescue Service - Near Cash	8,405		8,405
Fire and Rescue Service - Non Cash	20		20
Fire and Rescue Service - Communication Systems	3,915		3,915
Community Fire Safety	848		848
Total Fire and Rescue Services and Resilience Action	13,188	0	13,188
Total Safer Communities SPA	13,188	0	13,188
Older People Commissioner - Near Cash	1,589		1,589
Older People Commissioner - Non Cash	0	9	9
Children's Commissioner	1,580		1,580
Future Generations Commissioner Wales	1,509		1,509
Public Appointments	0	375	375
Total Commissioners Action	4,678	384	5,062
Total Commissioners SPA	4,678	384	5,062
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	6,825	1,050	7,875
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Action	6,825	1,050	7,875
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence SPA	6,825	1,050	7,875
Equality and Community Cohesion	8,091	4,595	12,686
Chwarae Teg	360		360
Total Community Cohesion Action	8,451	4,595	13,046
Total Equality & Inclusion SPA	8,451	4,595	13,046
Advice Services	10,175		10,175
Total Advice Services Action	10,175	0	10,175
Total Central Programmes SPA	10,175	0	10,175
Support for the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering	10,494	-3,000	7,494
Total Support for the Voluntary Sector Action	10,494	-3,000	7,494
Total Support for the Voluntary Sector SPA	10,494	-3,000	7,494
Community Support and Safety	18,925	3,700	22,625
Total Community Safety & Support Action	18,925	3,700	22,625
Total Community Support Officers SPA	18,925	3,700	22,625
Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints	1,075		1,075
Total Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints Action	1,075	0	1,075
Total Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints SPA	1,075	0	1,075
SOCIAL JUSTICE MEG TOTAL RESOURCE BUDGET	101,846	8,509	110,355

Capital Budget

BEL	2021-22 Final Budget £000's	Changes £000's	New Plans Draft Budget 2022-23 £000's
Supporting Communities	1,000		1,000
Community Bank	0	1,500	1,500
Total Supporting Communities Action	1,000	1,500	2,500
Total Supporting Communities SPA	1,000	1,500	2,500
Fire and Rescue Service	1,000		1,000
Fire and Rescue Service - Communication Systems	210		210
Community Fire Safety	670	230	900
Total Fire and Rescue Services and Resilience Action	1,880	230	2,110
Total Safer Communities SPA	1,880	230	2,110
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	2,169	31	2,200
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Action	2,169	31	2,200
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence SPA	2,169	31	2,200
Gypsy Traveller Sites	3,500	190	3,690
Total Gypsy Traveller Sites Action	3,500	190	3,690
Total Gypsy Traveller Sites SPA	3,500	190	3,690
Community Facilities Programme	8,338	-1,838	6,500
Total Community Facilities Action	8,338	-1,838	6,500
Total Community Facilities SPA	8,338	-1,838	6,500
SOCIAL JUSTICE MEG TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET	16,887	113	17,000

Annex B

Resource Budget

BEL	2021-22 1st Supplementary Budget (June 2021) £000's	New Plans Draft Budget 2022-23 £000's
Financial Inclusion	23,702	20,202
Digital Inclusion - Near Cash	1,250	1,250
Digital Inclusion - Non Cash	149	149
Supporting Communities	1,483	1,483
International Development	925	925
Social Partnerships	526	806
Basic Income	0	5,000
Total Supporting Communities Action	28,035	29,815
Advice Services	11,797	10,175
Total Advice Services Action	11,797	10,175
Support for the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering	10,494	7,494
Total Support for the Voluntary Sector Action	10,494	7,494
Total Supporting Communities SPA	50,326	47,484
Fire and Rescue Service - Near Cash	8,405	8,405
Fire and Rescue Service - Non Cash	20	20
Fire and Rescue Service - Communication Systems	3,915	3,915
Community Fire Safety	848	848
Total Fire and Rescue Services and Resilience Action	13,188	13,188
Total Safer Communities SPA	13,188	13,188
Older People Commissioner - Near Cash	1,589	1,589
Older People Commissioner - Non Cash	0	9
Children's Commissioner	1,580	1,580
Future Generations Commissioner Wales	1,509	1,509
Public Appointments	0	375
Total Commissioners Action	4,678	5,062
Total Commissioners SPA	4,678	5,062
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	6,825	7,875
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Action	6,825	7,875
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence SPA	6,825	7,875
Equality and Community Cohesion	8,091	12,686
Chwarae Teg	360	360
Total Community Cohesion Action	8,451	13,046
Total Equality & Community Cohesion SPA	8,451	13,046
Community Support and Safety	18,925	22,625
Total Community Safety & Support Action	18,925	22,625
Total Community Support Officers SPA	18,925	22,625
Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints	1,075	1,075
Total Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints Action	1,075	1,075
Total Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints SPA	1,075	1,075
SOCIAL JUSTICE MEG TOTAL RESOURCE BUDGET	103,468	110,355

Capital Budget

BEL	2021-22 1st Supplementary Budget (June 2021) £000's	New Plans Draft Budget 2022-23 £000's
Supporting Communities	1,000	1,000
Community Bank	0	1,500
Total Supporting Communities Action	1,000	2,500
Total Supporting Communities SPA	1,000	2,500
Fire and Rescue Service	1,000	1,000
Fire and Rescue Service - Communication Systems	210	210
Community Fire Safety	670	900
Total Fire and Rescue Services and Resilience Action	1,880	2,110
Total Safer Communities SPA	1,880	2,110
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	2,169	2,200
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Action	2,169	2,200
Total Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence SPA	2,169	2,200
Gypsy Traveller Sites	3,500	3,690
Total Gypsy Traveller Sites Action	3,500	3,690
Total Gypsy Traveller Sites SPA	3,500	3,690
Community Facilities Programme	8,338	6,500
Total Community Facilities Action	8,338	6,500
Total Community Facilities SPA	8,338	6,500
SOCIAL JUSTICE MEG TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET	16,887	17,000

Commentary to support Annex B

Supporting Communities

NEW BEL Basic Income	
Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	0
2022-23 Allocation	5,000
2022-23 Draft Budget	5,000

The Programme for Government 2021-2026 made a commitment to pilot the use of a basic income scheme in Wales which will involve a cohort of young people leaving care. The purpose of the pilot is to ensure young people in the pilot get all the support they need to give them the best possible chance to make their way in life and the transition out of care better, easier and more positive.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations
A budget allocation has been provided for the Basic Income BEL of £5m in 2022-23, £10m in 2023-24 and £5m in 2024-25

BEL 1694 Financial Inclusion	
Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	23,702
2021-22 Covid adjustments	-10,500
2022-23 Allocation	7,000
2022-23 Draft Budget	20,202

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,496
2022-23 Draft Budget	0

*Capital budgets are zero based.

The Financial Inclusion budget was a Financial Transaction Capital (FTC) budget. No FTCs have been allocated as part of Draft Budget, these will be allocated at Final Budget.

Financial Inclusion has a vital part to play in improving the well-being of people living in Wales by, for example, giving them access to affordable finance and access to trusted and independent information and advice services. These are central to giving everyone in Wales a fair chance in life, by helping them to understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices.

Grants funded from within this BEL include the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) funding for Credit Unions and smaller-scale financial inclusion activities.

Covid 19 Allocations 2021-22
£10.5m revenue was allocated to the DAF as part of the 2021-22 Final Budget to recognise the pressures in the first 6 months of the financial year and to continue the current relaxation of DAF rules to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on households suffering extreme financial hardship, alongside measures aimed at maximising household income and improving financial resilience. Further in year allocations have been provided since the first

supplementary budget and will be formalised as part of the second supplementary budget of 2021-22.

2021-22 Allocations

£1.5m financial transactions capital to support credit unions and other financial inclusion schemes (budget also reduced by £4k to reflect FTC repayments)

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

DAF has been allocated £7m as part of the 2022-23 Draft Budget which will be baselined into future years.

The Financial Transaction Capital (FTC) amount for 21-22 was £1.496m, no FTC will be allocated at Draft Budget. This is to be allocated at Final Budget.

BEL 1084 Digital Inclusion

Resource – Near Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,250
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,250

Resource – Non Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	149
2022-23 Draft Budget	149

Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being is the Welsh Government's procured digital inclusion programme, which commenced on 1 July 2019 with an annual budget of £2million (jointly funded by health via an in year transfer of budget). It works with organisations from all sectors that can help reach digitally excluded people. The programme focusses on improving the digital capabilities of citizens and health and social care staff, allowing more people to become active participants in their own health and wellbeing. The contract runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022 with an option to extend by a further 3 years pending funding agreement.

2021-22

Revenue budget (non-cash) increased by £149k in respect of depreciation against the Device Loan Scheme.

The 2021-22 budget will increase by £1m at the Final Supplementary Budget 2021-22 following a MEG to MEG transfer from HSS MEG.

BEL 1086 Supporting Communities

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,483
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,483

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,000
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,000

*Capital budgets are zero based

Funding covers shared outcomes project grants and activities which support communities' policy. This BEL also includes a small budget of £118k for Child Poverty. In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the BEL also received ETF funding of £2m to tackle food poverty (£1m revenue and £1m capital).

2021-22 Allocations

£1m revenue and £1m capital – European Transition Fund Tackling Food Poverty & Insecurity (this continues the allocation made in 20-21)

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Supporting Communities has been allocated £1m capital for each year from 2022-23 to 2024-25 as well as £3m revenue in 2024-25 towards the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The BEL will continue to provide £1m revenue funding to support food banks.

BEL 7074 International Development

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	925
2022-23 Draft Budget	925

The broader International Relations (IR) budget (which is with CSA MEG) has agreed to provide additional funding to the Wales and Africa programme in the past - for specific purposes related to the delivery of the International Strategy. Most significantly that has included funding for Size of Wales in the tree planting programme - with £350K agreed for this financial year (2021/22) and £250K agreed for next financial year (2022/23).

BEL 1693 Social Partnership

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	526
2022-23 Allocation	280
2022-23 Draft Budget	806

This budget will support and facilitate work across Government and with our Social Partners to deliver on the Welsh Government's Social partnership and Fair Work agenda. It will enable us to step up our work with social partners to champion the benefits of employers and Trade Unions working as partners in a spirit of collaboration, shared commitment and mutual respect.

It will support work to strengthen the system of social partnership in Wales and enhance collective capacity and capability to work in social partnership to further economic and social wellbeing and improve public service delivery. In addition, the budget will support our

activities in using every lever we have to help realise fair work outcomes and improve working lives for the better.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

A budget allocation has been provided for the Social Partnership BEL of £0.28m in 2022-23, £0.435m in 2023-24 2024-25

NEW BEL Community Bank

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	0
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,500

*Capital budgets are zero based

The PfG has a key commitment to support the creation of a Community Bank for Wales (Banc Cambria). The Community Bank aims to drive; improved access and quality of local multichannel bilingual banking services; facilitate local economic development; preventing cash drain and recycling cash within local communities. Supports financial and digital inclusion strategies.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Community Bank has been allocated £1.5m capital for years 2022-23 and 2023-24, with £1.75m allocated for 2024-25.

Fire and Rescue Services and Resilience

BEL 1265 Fire & Rescue Services

Resource – Near Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	8,405
2022-23 Draft Budget	8,405

Resource – Non Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	20
2022-23 Draft Budget	20

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,000
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,000

*Capital budgets are zero based

Revenue budget provides funding for the Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRAs) for the provision of a National Resilience (NR) capability to respond to major national-scale disasters; professional, legal and actuarial advice to the Welsh Ministers on fire matters, including in particular firefighters' pensions; and salary costs for Chief Fire Adviser, Assistant Fire Adviser, Crown Premises Inspector and Pensions Scheme Advisory Board chair. Revenue funding is also provided to meet the cost of an increase in employers' pension contributions arising from a decision by HM Treasury to adjust the discount rate used for valuing pension schemes in 2018.

Capital budget provides funding for the National Resilience (NR) capabilities: costs of the acquiring, maintaining and refreshing appliances and equipment which Fire and Rescue Authorities use to respond to national-scale incidents.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Fire & Rescue Services has been allocated £1m capital for 2022-23, £1.5m for 2023-24 and £1m for 2024-25.

Non cash budget will be transferred to the Central Services and Administration MEG in 2022-23 to align with the budget for the assets (resilience).

BEL 1697 Fire & Rescue Services Communication System

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	3,915
2022-23 Draft Budget	3,915

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	210
2022-23 Draft Budget	210

*Capital budgets are zero based

Revenue budget provides funding for the Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRAs) for the provision of Firelink, a robust and secure communication system for FRAs which is interoperable with the other emergency services' systems and its replacement system, the Emergency Services Network (ESN). The capital budget provides funding for the Firelink Digital Radio System contract.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Fire & Rescue Services Communication System has been allocated £0.21m capital for each year from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

BEL 1698 Community Fire Safety

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	848
2022-23 Draft Budget	848

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	670
2022-23 Draft Budget	900

*Capital budgets are zero based

Revenue funding to the Fire & Rescue Authorities for Community Fire Safety programmes concerned with arson reduction, youth and young people engagement and intervention (including the Phoenix project), home fire safety and innovation and diversification. There is a small budget of £30,000 to provide services & support for the Armed Forces community including a national Armed Forces Day for Wales.

Capital funding complements the Community Fire Safety Revenue budget and meets the cost of domestic fire safety equipment which Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) then install free of charge. In the past the emphasis has been largely on distributing smoke alarms to communities generally; but it is now much more on providing more extensive and complex equipment to people at the highest risk of fire (e.g. frail older people, those with sensory or mobility impairments, and single parents of young children).

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Community Fire Safety has been allocated £0.9m capital for each year from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

BEL 1699 Fire Service Pensions

AME	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	27,915
2022-23 Allocation	148
2022-23 Draft Budget	28,063

Firefighters' pensions are, uniquely, devolved. There are two closed pension schemes (dating from 1992 and 2007) and the current 2015 scheme, plus separate arrangements for retained (on-call) firefighters. In all cases, scheme benefits are paid directly from cash contributions each year, rather than from the returns on invested funds. This budget covers the shortfall each year between employer and employee contributions on the one hand, and benefits payable to retired scheme members on the other. As this is AME funding, it cannot be applied to any other purpose.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Fire Service Pensions has been allocated £28.063m AME for 2022-23 and £26.045m for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Commissioners

BEL 0662 Older People Commissioner

Resource – Near Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,589
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,589

Resource – Non Cash	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	0
2022-23 Draft Budget	9

The Commissioner's strategy 2019-22 focuses on three key aims:

1. Ending ageism and discrimination.
2. Stopping the abuse of older people.
3. Enabling everyone to age well.

The Commissioner has had to change her priorities a little to focus on the impact of Covid-19 on older people. Rights have been highest on the agenda particularly with regards to the provision of health and care services.

Protecting and Promoting Older People's Rights has now been added to her key priorities for 2021-22, alongside the three published in her 2019-22 Strategy.

Looking forward (2022-23) she aims to focus on ensuring that older people are not left behind as Wales emerges from the pandemic. Contributing to the Covid-19 inquiry will be key to this.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Older People Commissioner has been allocated £9k non cash as part of the 2022-23 Draft Budget which will be baselined into future years.

BEL 480 Children's Commissioner

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,580
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,580

Established by the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Commissioner for Wales is an independent children's rights institution. The remit is laid down in the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001, which amended the Care Standards Act 2000. It is a statutory role, set out in legislation, and the Welsh Government is required to fund it. The budget covers the running costs of the Commissioner's office and the resources required in discharging her statutory functions.

BEL 6400 Future Generations Commissioner Wales

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,509
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,509

The Commissioner's role is to be the guardian of future generations. This means helping public bodies and those who make policy in Wales to think about the long-term impact their decisions have.

A large proportion of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' (FGCfW) budget equates to staff costs and the remainder has been set aside for costs related to facilities, projects, staff training, audits and contingency as set out in her 2021-22 statutory estimate.

NEW BEL Public Appointments

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	0
2022-23 Allocation	375
2022-23 Draft Budget	375

We are committed to exploring with local government and trades unions in Wales how to make progress on our longstanding commitment to improve fairness in pay arrangements, but this is in the face of a challenging financial settlement, particularly to address the impact of COVID on our NHS and our progressive social agenda.

We also committed to addressing pay disparity across different public bodies. I have already initiated an exercise to achieving pay parity across broadly similar grades in different public bodies, which has included within its scope the Welsh Government, Public Bodies, the NHS, Local Authorities and Welsh Government companies such as Transport for Wales and Cardiff Airport. However any funding will need to be found from within existing settlements.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

A budget allocation has been provided for the Public Appointments BEL of £0.375m for 2022-23 and £0.6m for each year from 2023-24 to 2024-25.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

BEL 0541 Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence	
Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	6,825
2022-23 Allocation	1,050
2022-23 Draft Budget	7,875
Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	2,169
2022-23 Draft Budget	2,200
*Capital budgets are zero based	
<p>The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence revenue Grant (Domestic Abuse Services Grant) meets Welsh Government's statutory requirement in delivering the purposes of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 in eliminating all forms of Violence against Women. This is supported by the National VAWDASV Strategy 2022-2026.</p> <p>The Capital grant supports the delivery of the Act. Its main purpose is to acquire or maintain/upgrade fixed assets such as buildings and equipment for those organisations working within the VAWDASV sector. Over the past several years, the Grant has supported such projects as the purchase of buildings to support VAWDASV services; target hardening equipment; building improvements (e.g. disabled people's access; distinct waiting areas to separate victims and perpetrators; general repairs and refurbishments); purchase of iPads for support workers to reach victims in rural areas; adaptations to communal refuges to create private move-on accommodation; and the establishment of 'One Stop Shops' across Wales.</p> <p>2021-22 allocations A further revenue allocation of £1.575m was made from reserves to maintain budgets at 20-21 levels.</p> <p>Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence has been allocated £1.050m revenue for each year from 2022-23 to 2024-25 and £2.2m capital for years 2022-23 to 2024-25.</p>	

Community Cohesion

BEL 7060 Equality and Community Cohesion	
Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	8,091
2022-23 Allocation	4,595
2022-23 Draft Budget	12,686
<p>Covid-19 has had an unequal impact on people in our communities. Disabled people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQI+ people, women and those from more socio-</p>	

economically disadvantaged backgrounds have been amongst the most affected. To achieve a fairer recovery and help stop inequality becoming further entrenched, action must be taken and the allocations reflect the need to make progress on this.

The Race Equality Action Plan and other activities will contribute to the Welsh Government's commitment to advance and strengthen equality and human rights, improving outcomes for people and contributing to a more equal Wales.

This will be achieved through funding actions arising from the Race Equality Action Plan, the Disability Rights Taskforce, the LGBTQI+ Action plan and commitments to further embed Period Dignity. There is a commitment to introduce legislation to incorporate specific UN Conventions into Welsh Law as well as taking specific actions in relation to legislation around Banning Conversion Therapy and devolution of the Gender Recognition Act.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Equality and Community Cohesion BEL 7060 has been allocated £4.595m for 2022-23, £9.541m in 2023-24 and £12.741m in 2024-25 towards the Race Equality Action Plan and Other activities.

BEL 6664 Chwarae Teg

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	360
2022-23 Draft Budget	360

The core funding is managed by Employability and Skills, as the delivery undertaken is aligned to Employability Support.

The budget will bring a renewed focus to their work in 2021-22 as highlighted as a result of COVID focusing on:

- The under representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic women and provide recommendations for engaging with them;
- Further research into how employers can engage to take on disabled workers and the benefits to the company;
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women in Wales, looking at both the immediate and long term challenges on women's engagement with the economy.
- Engagement with the new Employability programmes working with key stakeholders to engage with individuals entering the programmes.

Advocacy Service

BEL 5334 Advice Services

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	11,797
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget Allocations	-1,622
2022-23 Draft Budget	10,175

Commitments cover grant for the Single Advice Fund and for activities linked to the Information and Advice Quality Framework (IAQF), National and Regional Advice Networks and administrative/support costs.

BEL also includes a transfer in of £174k in relation to the ETF Settled Status and Immigration Project. WG has contracted Newfields Law to deliver an immigration advice service so that EU citizens in Wales can access free advice and support to apply for EU Settled Status (EUSS).

2021-22 allocations made at first sup

Additional revenue of £1.622m in respect of Financial Levy for Debt Advice. Allocations are made on a non-recurrent annual basis, further in year allocations are expected during 2022-23.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Advice Services BEL has been allocated £1.674m for 2023-24 to 2024-25 to support the expansion of the Single Advice Fund and income maximisation projects.

Support for the Voluntary Sector

BEL 1695 Support for the Voluntary Sector

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	10,494
2021-22 Covid adjustments	-3,000
2022-23 Draft Budget	7,494

The statutory Third Sector Scheme (2014) sets out how the Welsh Government will promote the interests of relevant voluntary organisations. Welsh Government, through the Third Sector Scheme supports a Third Sector Infrastructure which represents, promotes, supports and is accountable to the Third Sector at all levels.

During 20-21 significant additional support was provided to the Third Sector to support its response and that of its volunteers to the pandemic. Additional funding of £3m was agreed as part of the 21-22 Draft Budget to continue this financial support during the first quarter of 21-22.

Covid 19 Allocations 2021-22

£3m revenue to continue support for the Third Sector Response Fund for the first quarter of the financial year. Further allocations have been made following publication of the first supplementary budget.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Support for the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering BEL has been allocated £1.8m for 2024-25.

Community Safety and Safety

BEL 0830 Community Support and Safety

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	18,925
2022-23 Allocation	3,700
2022-23 Draft Budget	22,625

A key Programme for Government commitment has been to increase the number of Community Support Officers across Wales from 500 to 600. The additional costs of recruiting an additional 100 officers in 2021-22 has been calculated to be £3.7m.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

Community Support and Safety BEL has been allocated £3.7m for years 2023-23 to 2024-25 towards funding an extra 100 PCSOs.

Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints

BEL 1267 Female Offenders & Youth Justice Blueprints

Resource	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	1,075
2022-23 Draft Budget	1,075

The Female Offending and Youth Justice Blueprints are part of the Programme Government commitment for pursuing the case for the devolution of policing and justice. The ongoing delivery of the Blueprints provides the foundation for strengthening and improving the justice system in Wales, ensuring it meets the distinct needs of Welsh people.

The Blueprints set out a distinct approach to justice services in Wales, one that focuses on early intervention and prevention, seeking to divert people away from crime in the first place, but also to deliver holistic and rehabilitative support to those who slip through the net.

Gypsy Traveller Sites

BEL 1008 Gypsy Traveller Sites

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	3,500
2022-23 Draft Budget	3,690

*Capital budgets are zero based

The budget covers the development of new sites, site extensions and refurbishment projects at local authority owned sites across Wales. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to periodically assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers “residing in or resorting to” their area and to meet those identified needs.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Gypsy Traveller Sites has been allocated £3.7m for 2022-23, £3.2m for 23-24 and £3.4m for 2024-25.

Community Facilities

BEL 1372 Community Facilities Programme

Capital	£'000s
2021-22 First Supplementary Budget	10,318
2022-23 Draft Budget	6,500

*Capital budgets are zero based

The Community Facilities Programme offers capital grants at two levels; up to £25k and up to £250k. Grants must be used to develop community facilities which provide opportunities for local people to improve their day to day lives.

A general capital allocation of £3.5m was made at Draft Budget 2021-22 to support the delivery of additional pipeline projects. An allocation of £2m financial transactions capital was also made to support the Community Asset Loan Fund, the budget is offset by a £20k scheduled repayment in respect of the scheme.

Draft Budget 2022-25 allocations

The Community Facilities Programme BEL has been allocated £6.5m capital for years 2022-23 to 2024-25.

The Financial Transaction Capital (FTC) amount for 21-22 was £1.980m, no FTC will be allocated at Draft Budget. This is to be allocated at Final Budget.

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Cardiff Bay
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SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

26 November 2021

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 9 November on behalf of the Equality and Social Justice Committee. As the Minister for Social Justice, I am a passionate advocate for the protection of all citizens' rights and by supporting citizens to obtain residency status, where they wish to do so, we are ensuring we continue to safeguard those rights going forward. I welcome the Committee's commitment to monitor the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in Wales and will do all I can to support that work.

I note the areas on which you have requested an update, based on the objectives of the EUSS Co-ordination Group, and have provided information against each point below.

To share reports on the work of the supporting organisations, including on best practice and issues in relation to the EUSS

The EUSS Co-ordination Group, chaired by the Welsh Government, consists of a number of external partners that support citizens in their applications to the EUSS. Members include Newfields Law, the Wales Civil Society Forum, Citizens Advice Cymru, Migrant Help, Newport Mind, the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, TGP Cymru, the Welsh Local Government Association, Settled, Wales TUC Cymru, the Royal Association for Deaf People and the Public Law Project.

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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 meets every two months and at each meeting stakeholders provide updates on the work they have undertaken to date and the work they have planned for the future. The next meeting is scheduled for 22 January 2022 and I am planning on attending that meeting so I will raise your request for reports to be shared and let you know the outcome. My proposal would be to share the minutes of future meetings with the Committee, as this will outline all updates given.

To promote public awareness of, and participation in, the EUSS in Wales and to maximise citizen access to the EUSS in Wales through focused publicity;

The UK Government, the Welsh Government and partners continue to communicate messaging around the EUSS. Recently, the Welsh Government targeted healthcare settings, such as vaccination centres and local general practices, to publicise messaging, in a number of European languages, around EUSS and to continue to encourage applications even though the deadline has passed. Only last week, I also wrote to Cabinet colleagues to ask for their continued support in this area.

More recently I have agreed funding to undertake another digital awareness campaign, which will run over the coming months, and focus on communicating messaging around late applications, applications for children and other cared for family members, applications for joining family members and to encourage EU citizens to update their online digital status.

The Welsh Government will also continue to update its 'Preparing Wales' platform with key messaging and information on the EUSS , on an ongoing basis.

To ensure there are consistent EUSS advice services available in Wales, with the right level of support targeted at the right people

The Welsh Government has recently announced the extension of the EU Citizens Immigration Advice Services until March 2022. This extension will ensure that both citizens who missed the EUSS deadline and those who need to make an application for settled status having previously obtained pre-settled status continue to have access to the support they may need. In addition to this, the UK Government has also announced that it will continue its grant funding to organisations supporting the EUSS until March 2022.

Specialist immigration law firm, Newfields law, is one of the organisations funded by the Welsh Government to provide the following:

- Information and support, including immigration advice, to help EU/EEA/Swiss nationals and their family members to understand how they are affected by changes in the immigration rules as a result of the UK leaving the EU;
- Awareness raising and better understanding of rights, entitlements and requirements which are affected by an individual's immigration status;
- Giving particular focus to supporting vulnerable people, those with complex needs and those who are at higher risk of failing to secure settled or pre-settled status.
- Provide an advice service up until 31 March 2022 and enable people to access advice at a time, place and means that best fits their needs.
- Support individuals with a right to appeal an outcome given by the Home Office

To identify any gaps in the current supported provisions and assist the Welsh Government/Home Office in finding solutions to overcome any issues

The Welsh Government continues to engage regularly with both external stakeholders and other Governments to monitor any ongoing concerns or issues in regards to the EUSS. The EUSS Co-ordination Group meetings provide a platform for all stakeholders to voice concerns and discuss mitigations in a collaborative manner.

Welsh Government policy officials also continue to meet with the UK Government on a fortnightly basis to discuss EUSS developments, ongoing communications efforts and to raise any concerns and queries.

As I mentioned earlier the next meeting of the EUSS Co-ordination Group is scheduled for 22 January and at that meeting I will seek members' views on the manner in which updates are provided to the committee going forward.

I shall write to the Committee following that meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', with a horizontal line above it.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

Agenda Item 3.2

Comisiynydd
Plant Cymru
Children's
Commissioner
for Wales

To: Chairs of the Senedd
CYPE and Equalities and
Social Justice
Committees

Dear Chair

Budget scrutiny 2022-23

I write in relation to your Committee's ongoing scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget 2022-23.

Via email only

Date: 14th January 2022

Throughout my term as Children's Commissioner for Wales I have carefully scrutinised the budget proposals in respect of provision for children and respect for children's rights. I have previously highlighted anomalous areas where budget lines benefitting children have been mistakenly removed, in relation to support for minority ethnic groups' education and the School Beat police liaison programme, and I have worked alongside the Senedd CYPE Committee in particular to rectify these deficits. I have also consistently raised the need for overall consideration of the Budget from a children's rights perspective and have welcomed a series of Committee recommendations in this regard.

There is not a published Children's Rights Impact Assessment for the Budget again this year, as I note the CYPE Committee has already raised with Ministers. This suggests that there has not been a coherent and overall consideration of the children's rights implications of the budget settlement. There are just five short paragraphs about children in the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment, which include overt recognition that the impact of the pandemic is disproportionately affecting young people, and putting them at elevated risk of mental health issues throughout their life course. And yet there is nothing further said about how the Budget as a whole aims to mitigate against that impact and no mention or consideration of children's rights.

It is noted that this budget presents an uplift for many public services, in response, in part, to the Covid-19 pandemic of course. This is welcomed.

As independent champion for children across Wales, it is my statutory role and legislative remit to hold those bodies to account on their delivery and provision for children's rights. Yet I find myself in the absolutely unprecedented position of having to make representations regarding the level of my own budget, presented by Welsh Government as a 'flat budget' for the next three years, but



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Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg yn ogystal â'r Saesneg ac mewn amryw o fformatau
We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh and English as well as alternative formats

resulting in what is a real terms cuts to the funding needed to sustain the important work of our organisation.

What we requested in our estimate

The statutory Budget Estimate that I submitted to the Government in October 2021 set out the needs of the organisation on a full resource basis, as is required by Welsh Government. A copy of that Estimate is appended in full to this letter to provide further context and evidence to the points I raise in this letter. The figure assessed as necessary for the organisation to continue to function for the next year was £1,695,765, leaving a shortfall of £115,765 in year from the £1,580,000 that is proposed. With a projected 'flat budget' for the two subsequent years as well, this presents a significant challenge to the financial sustainability and performance of the organisation in its current format. Costs outside my control as accounting officer, such as national insurance and pensions, will continue to rise during this period.

Throughout my term as commissioner, I have been acutely aware of the need to deliver best value for money during times of austerity for public services in Wales. I have no other income-generating opportunities but have managed to:

- Systematically reduce the high level of financial reserves inherited at the time of my appointment to a level that falls within Welsh Government accounting guidelines, in line with the Designation Order;
- Decrease staffing complement as a result of a 10% cut to my budget in year 1;
- Decrease our office footprint by 64%;
- Increase both outputs and impacts – referred to by the CYPE Committee as 'astonishing' - over the last 6 years with a 'flat budget', which has amounted to real terms annual budget cuts;
- Undertake additional work during the pandemic, including two large-scale, internationally renowned surveys of children and young people without requesting additional funds.

I have written to my link Minister, Jane Hutt, to raise my concerns, but felt it was important to also raise this with the relevant scrutiny committees in relation to this area of work. I have therefore sent this letter to the Chairs of both the Senedd CYPE Committee and the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee. My budget falls within the Social Justice allocation, alongside the other statutory Commissioners, but my usual annual scrutiny sits with the CYPE Committee, hence my reasoning for approaching both committees in this regard.

Key reasons for requesting a modest increase

1. The vast majority of my budget is taken up by fixed costs for staffing, premises, IT and other regulatory requirements such as financial audits. These costs have risen significantly during my term, alongside a reduced budget income and the reduction in reserves. This includes a **64% rise in pension costs since 2018**, which is beyond my control, while staff wages have risen by only 11% overall. The Estimate submitted sets out in substantial detail the efforts made to reduce fixed costs and seek greater value for money for the public purse but I have reached the stage where there is nowhere else that can be cut without this affecting the organisation's delivery and how we meet our statutory remit and obligations.
2. The new Children's Commissioner will take up post in April 2022. As custodian of the office, I feel morally and professionally obligated to deliver the organisation to my successor in a stable and sustainable financial position, which is why I submitted the Budget Estimate with a request for a modest uplift on a costed and resource basis. Without that modest increase, my successor will be unable to meet the rising costs that will be outside of her immediate control as Accounting Officer, and this will negatively impact her delivery of the role. This creates an unfair situation and public perception for a new incumbent, who may face criticism for a more limited work plan or approach, when in fact this will be beyond her control due to insufficient funding.

I note that the Senedd CYPE Committee, in its report on the pre-appointment process for the new commissioner, raised a number of areas on which they would expect the office to focus throughout her term. These include effective engagement with children and young people across the whole country, building new professional networks to support this, measuring the impact of the office's complex and multi-faceted work, taking tangible concrete action to make a real difference to children's lives and taking time and care to listen to all children including Welsh-speaking children. These are fair and reasonable expectations, based on their full engagement with the appointment process, and this work will require sufficient resource and expertise to ensure that the Committee's expectations can be observed.

Impact of draft budget settlement

There are some key potential impacts of the draft allocation that I will set out next, but in short, they will mean changes to the work programme of the office, our ability to act as a critical friend to the Government and public services, and to retention of our highly skilled staff team. All of these are likely to have an impact on children's rights in Wales and the ambitions of Welsh Government for its Programme and values.

1. Changes to agreed programme of work for the organisation

If the draft budget settlement remains unchanged, this will require the organisation to choose between planned areas of work. The work plan for 2022-23 has already been set by the staff team in consultation with our young people's and adult strategic advisory panels and presents a continuation of many important areas of work rather than a quiet or transitional year for the new Commissioner. The work plan includes projects in relation to young people's involvement in democracy, climate change, support for neurodiverse children, education provision in healthcare settings, supporting the implementation of the ALN and Curriculum legislation and the new children's rights duties within them, reporting to the UN Committee on the UK and Welsh Government's record on children's rights, supporting public bodies to implement a children's rights approach and further work on equalities.

This is just the project work proposed and doesn't include our ongoing core work such as:

- Running our successful Ambassador programmes for schools and communities;
- Maintaining our independent, bilingual and free to access investigation and advice service;
- Making an active contribution as an independent member of Government working groups that meet very frequently including eliminating profit in care, mental health and well-being, safeguarding in education, and many others;
- Responding to and informing Government consultations on a wide range of topics;
- Consulting with thousands of children and young people, both to set and inform our ongoing work programmes;
- Maintaining adult and young people's advisory groups to help us critically plan and consider all of our work programme and actions are making the best contribution to children's rights in Wales;

- Bringing young people to meet Ministers to help inform their decision making, and supporting them appropriately to engage with such meetings; and
- Responding to new and emerging challenges for children and young people.

I fear this settlement will restrict the ability of the Commissioner to set an independent work programme covering all of the areas that are important to children and young people in Wales today, and fulfilling the legal remit of the post. A number of rising costs, such as energy and pension costs, are beyond our control, meaning that there will be limited funding available to be responsive and to set an ambitious and appropriate work programme for the children of Wales.

2. Change to the way we work with Welsh Government

The proposed real terms budget cut will fundamentally alter the current working relationship between the office and the Government. Particularly during the pandemic, as my *Coronavirus and Us* reports demonstrate, we responded swiftly and comprehensively to very short notice requests for advice and support from the Welsh Government. This includes the two internationally-renowned Coronavirus and Me surveys, for which no additional funding was requested or received from any partners including the Government, and instigating and supporting the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing activities. We estimate that these pieces of work alone would have cost the Welsh Government over £100,000 in 2020-22 if they had procured these from another organisation. We regarded these as our contribution to the national emergency as a public service. We have been able to deliver a high standard of work, at pace, due to our experienced and knowledgeable staff team – an asset not only to us as an organisation but also to public service delivery in Wales.

During the pandemic on a weekly, if not daily at times, basis, my staff have collated and submitted children's rights impact assessments on new and confidential policy proposals to advise the Government. I am aware of a number of instances in education and social services where this has significantly altered the policy options being considered by Government, and this ready source of advice has come to be relied upon. I know from Ministers and officials that this work is very much appreciated, and that there is limited expertise within the Government to perform such an expert role.

Continued 'upstream' support of the Government's work at its current levels will simply not be possible or sustainable under the proposed settlement; either because we will need to dedicate more staff time and resource to our project

work in the absence of adequate funding to undertake pieces of thematic work, and/or in light of the need for an organisational restructure.

3. Impact on the effective delivery of the Programme for Government

If unchanged, the draft budget settlement will have a knock on impact on the delivery of the Programme for Government. There are a number of important and very welcome commitments to children in the updated Programme, including the extension of free school meals to primary school children, an expanded childcare offer, mental health sanctuaries and safe places for children and families to attend in a crisis, eliminating profit in children's care services, extension of the school day and the well-being offer for children, the roll out of the new ALN and Curriculum legislation and many more besides. My office has been actively engaged in all of these policy areas and our expert advice and contributions are drawn upon on a regular basis.

My approach has been to work alongside the Government as a critical friend, to get things right first time rather than to await announcements and criticise from the sidelines. This was not only a recommendation from the Shooter review of the office in 2014, but I also believe this to be the best way to deliver successful policies and outcomes for children.

The Budget narrative for 2022-23 includes a commitment to "*continue to protect, rebuild and develop [our] public services*" but the role of my office in holding those services to account on behalf of children will be hampered if a similar approach is not taken to our financial settlement. It is also stated that "*We cannot, and will not, ignore the devastating impacts the pandemic continues to have on the people of Wales. These impacts have not fallen equally or fairly.*" Children are one of the groups that have felt a particularly burdensome impact from the pandemic, and continue to do so. As independent champion for children's rights and welfare in Wales, it is vital that my organisation is afforded sufficient funding to represent their interests, and to hear their ongoing experiences so that this can be fed into and inform evolving Government policy on Covid recovery.

4. Impact on staffing costs

If the allocation for my office remains at a 'flat' level for the next three years, a likely consequence is that we will have to reduce the staff costs through any of a number of difficult options. This could mean that we would be unable to implement the fair and negotiated civil service pay settlement for this year that has been agreed by the Welsh Government, nor give any prospects of an increase over the next two years. I am concerned that this will risk staff morale and mental health; in the short term potentially affecting productivity in the first year of a new Commissioner's term and longer term seeing these experienced staff vacating their posts in pursuit of opportunities elsewhere. A

second, equally challenging, option would be a restructure by my successor in her first year, causing significant disruption and upheaval to the delivery of the new Commissioner's work priorities and statutory remit. This is all avoidable with a modest increase that would enable us to maintain a stable workforce and output.

Next steps

The Estimate sets out the range of measures I have undertaken to reduce costs in the organisation as well as a number of substantially higher fixed costs that are beyond the control of my organisation. In short, there is nothing left that I am able to change or cut that would not affect the delivery of our work and the critical advice and support that we regularly offer to the Welsh Government.

I have asked the Government for a substantive response as to how the decision was reached to continue providing the same settlement as previous years during a period where costs outside the accounting officer's control are rising. In light of the curtailed process for scrutiny of the Budget however, I felt it imperative to also raise my concerns with the relevant scrutiny committees.

I would be happy to engage in further scrutiny with your Committee and its members in this regard.

Yours sincerely



Sally Holland
Comisiynydd Plant Cymru
Children's Commissioner for Wales

Encl. CCfW Budget Estimate 2022/23

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a gwladau a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd cysylltu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi | We welcome receiving correspondence and calls in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence and calls in Welsh, and contacting us in Welsh will not lead to delay.

Children's Commissioner for Wales Budget estimate 2022-23

Contents

1. Estimate submission
2. Role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales
3. Governance arrangements
4. Achievements
5. Discussion and impact on the General Fund
6. Underlying Assumptions

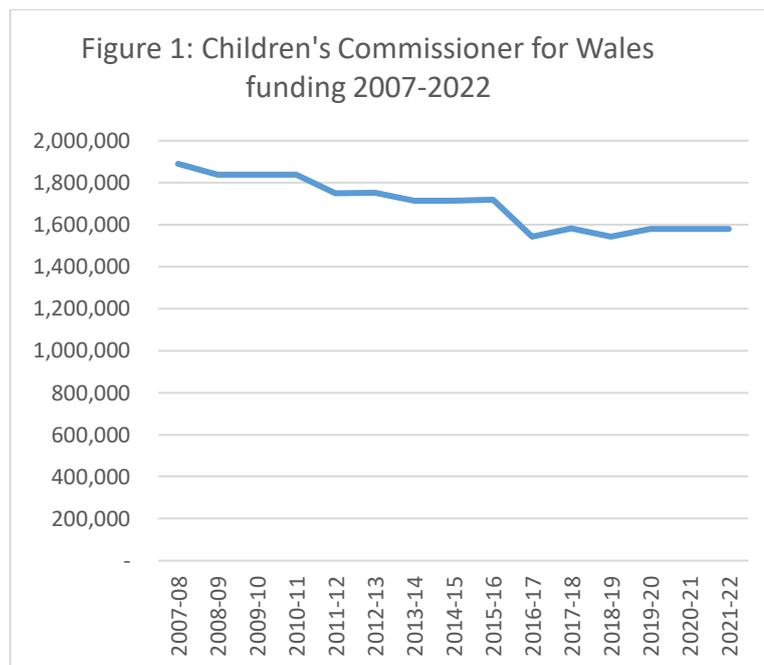
1. Estimate submission

This estimate indicates the resource requirements of my office for 2022-23, with an indicative budget for the two subsequent years. It is a request to maintain a stable and sustainable organisation fit to deliver its statutory obligations.

This document sets out contextual factors that explain trends in income, expenditure and the general fund that have shaped my office over the last six years and how we have contributed as a public body to the national efforts to deliver the best value for money in an age of austerity. In particular, the following factors are relevant:

a) Five years of Welsh Government funding at a level significantly lower than the eight years prior to 2016.

This is illustrated in figure 1:



My office's income from Welsh Government every year since 2016 has been at a lower level than the annual income for my office was for the eight years prior to 2016, as is illustrated in Figure 1. My team and I have managed this reduced income through an initial staff restructure, which involved a number of redundancies, the closure of a satellite office, the planned use of reserves held by the office and prudent spending on projects and office costs. Despite this reduced income, it could be argued that my Annual Reports since 2016 demonstrate that productivity by my office in terms of both outputs and impact for children has been higher than ever.

b) A planned reduction in our general fund in line with our organisational policy and the Welsh Government’s requirements for Government-funded bodies.

In April 2015 when I took up office, the General Fund held by the office was £408,000. By April 2021 it was £51,000. As previous estimates have highlighted, the prudent and planned use of

our reserves has allowed my office to undertake its activities over the last few years despite rising costs and a largely flat budget. However, the remaining balance of the General Fund is no longer sufficient to meet the shortfall between our annual grant and rising costs.

c) Rising costs, largely attributable to staff costs.

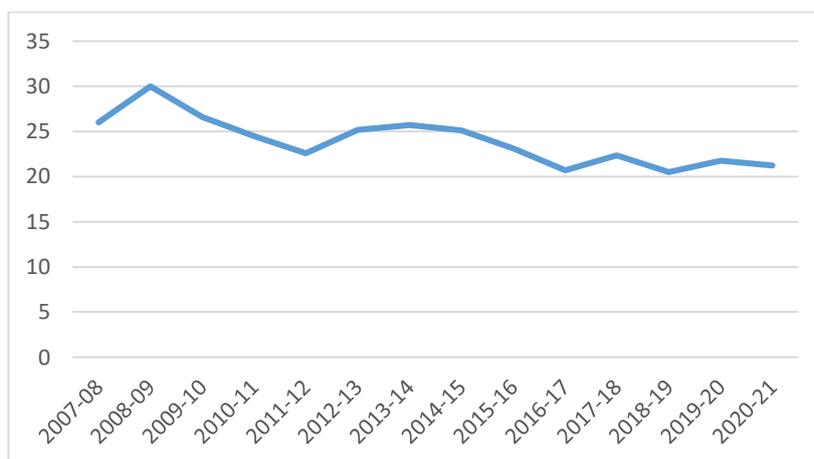
Like all public sector employers, my office has faced increased staff costs, largely due to increased pension contributions, incremental in-band pay increases that mirror those of the civil service, and the anticipated increase in employers’ national insurance contributions – elements which are entirely outside of my control as Accounting Officer. In the last four years, the rise in pension costs (64%) has significantly outstripped the rise in our wage bill (11.4%) as can be seen in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Rise in staffing costs 2017-21.

Description	2017-18 (£'000)	2020-21 (£'000)	Percentage change between periods
Salaries and Wages	858	956	11.4 %
Social Security	85	96	12.9 %
Pension	139	228	64 %
Secondments	(78)	(22)	
Total	1,004	1,258	25.3 %

Although my staffing complement is smaller than when I took up post in 2015, as can be seen in **Figure 2**, it is a largely stable workforce meaning that many of my staff have reached the top of their pay band levels. This brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the work of the office as well as stability in our workforce; it means I have a staff team who are able to deliver, at fast pace, high quality and high volume work.

Figure 2: Average Staff Numbers 2007-21



d) Reduced non-staff costs, including office costs.

In addition to a reduction in the staffing complement, the **physical office space we are occupying is also 64% smaller** than when I took up post in 2015, delivering more value for the public purse. This has been achieved by reducing the number of offices from two to one in 2016 and a move to a smaller office in 2021.

Table 2: reduction in office occupancy by square metre 2015-2021

	2015-16	2021-22	Difference	Difference (%)
Office Accommodation square metre	664.94 (m2)	238 (m2)	426.94 (m2)	64.2

With our new accommodation, we are in a prime position to be able to establish ourselves as a real public sector hub in the heart of Port Talbot in a sustainable building, accessible to all via solid public transport infrastructure, a suitable and safe space for staff. This move included cost savings of £56,000 from the figure of our dilapidations provision and on average a saving of £20,000 per year on rates and rental costs.

Travel and subsistence costs have more than halved compared to pre-2015 figures (with savings pre-dating the Covid19 pandemic restrictions) due to my determination to ensure sustainable travel by myself and the team, and the **training and development budget is also around one-third lower** than in the two years prior to 2015. We have instead allocated as much of our funding as is possible to delivering our statutory duties for children in Wales. Despite these sustained efforts to reduce spend by the office, staffing costs outside of our control have increased rapidly as described above.

In line with the ambitions of the Welsh Government’s alignment exercise, I have based my budget estimate for 2022-23 on the resource needs of my office, which includes a number of assumptions within this estimate. They include the level of inflation over the financial periods

and the greater use of homeworking as a means to deliver the organisation’s activities. I have set out more detail on these assumptions within section 6 of this estimate.

It should also be noted that:

- This estimate is submitted in a year where the **continuing impact of Covid-19 and some uncertainty** on how this may affect issues such as home-working arrangements in the medium to long-term remain. This has a variable impact on budget lines including IT (including cyber security) costs and travel and subsistence.
- The **Government has not concluded its exercise to amend the Government of Wales Act 2006** (Budget Motions and Designated Bodies) Order 2018 and the impact of this ‘alignment exercise’ on some aspects of our financial operations is still unconfirmed. Nonetheless, this estimate complies with the requirements of this process that have been communicated to us by Government officials.

I therefore submit this budget estimate to Welsh Ministers as required by paragraph 6 (2) of Schedule 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000. It sets out the resources required to discharge my statutory functions. My total resource budget for 2022-23 is **£1,695,765**.

Table 1: Estimate and indicative budget level for the next three financial years

	Estimate 2022-23	Indicative 2023-24	Indicative 2024-25
	(£)	(£)	(£)
Salaries (including pension contribution)	1,300,799 ^[1]	1,281,524	1,284,487
Premises	70,573	71,984	73,424
Office costs	68,550	69,921	71,319
Training and wellbeing	23,000 ^[2]	17,460	17,929
Travel and subsistence	9,300	9,486	9,676
External audit fee	17,643	17,643	17,643
Internal audit fee	12,600	12,600	12,600
Communication	40,500	41,310	42,136
ICT	33,000	33,660	34,333
Project costs	102,800	79,856	81,454
Capital and depreciation	17,000	17,000	17,000
Total Resource Budget	1,695,765	1,652,444	1,662,001

^[1] The higher staffing costs for 2022-23 include the costs of an appointment to cover anticipated maternity leave for a critical post

^[2] Higher training costs in 2022-23 allow for potential need for intense Welsh language tutoring for the newly appointed Commissioner if they are not already fluent in Welsh, as per Welsh Government’s job description.

2. Role and functions of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

Established by the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW) is an independent children's rights institution. My remit is laid down in the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001, which amended the Care Standards Act 2000. My principal aim is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children. This must be my overriding objective when undertaking my functions.

A child is defined in the 2000 Act as a person under the age of 18, although I am able to act when a young person is older than this when certain conditions are fulfilled. For example, I can act on behalf of a young person who has been placed in care, and for whom the local authority has a continuing duty under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 up to the age of 25.

In exercising my functions, I must have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – an international charter, which, sets out the minimum standards for children and young people wherever they live. The UNCRC underpins all of my work. To ensure children's rights are upheld in Wales, I can review the exercise of functions of various public bodies and of Welsh Government, and review and monitor the arrangements which certain public bodies have in place to safeguard and promote the rights of children in respect of dealing with complaints and representations, ensuring that proper action is taken in response to whistleblowing, representing the views and wishes of children, and providing children with advice and support.

My remit covers all areas of the devolved powers of the Senedd insofar as they affect children's rights and welfare. I can also make representations to the Welsh Ministers about any matter affecting the rights and welfare of children in Wales.

3. Governance arrangements

As a public office in receipt of public funds, I am committed to implementing rigorous and transparent accountability and decision-making systems. My governance framework comprises the systems, processes and values by which the organisation is directed and controlled. Below is a description of my governance structure. Further details of the membership of each group, attendance and respective terms of reference can be accessed on my website.

- **Commissioner:** is a corporation sole and accounting officer.
- **Management Team:** Its primary purpose is to provide the Commissioner with support and advice on the strategic direction of the organisation, including contributing to the development of strategic aims and annual work plans. The Team is also responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation, managing the operational, day-to-day running of the office in line with the organisation's values.
- **Commissioner's Young People's and Adult Advisory Panels:** These panels provide independent advice support, scrutiny and challenge to the Commissioner and staff, so as to secure the effective delivery of the Commissioner's statutory responsibilities and her staff regarding policies and proposals, informing the policy and strategic priorities.
- **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee:** Advises the Commissioner on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance, accounting policies, the accounts, and the

planned activity and results of both internal and external audit. Non-executive members also provide challenge with regard to my expenditure and my estimate.

- **Internal Audit:** TIAA Ltd provides internal audit for my office. They were appointed from 1st April 2021, following a joint procurement exercise by the Ombudsman and other Commissioners offices. They operate to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and submit regular reports, which include the independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's system of internal control. In their latest Annual Report to me, Deloitte, my previous internal auditor, provided substantial assurance in relation to corporate governance and risk management. They also concluded that I have a sound system of internal controls, which should provide assurance regarding the achievement of my objectives.
- **External Audit:** On an annual basis, my organisation's accounts are examined and certified by the Auditor General for Wales, in accordance with paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 to the Care Standards Act. The Auditor General is responsible for providing an opinion on whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation. They consider a number of matters both qualitative and quantitative relating to the accounts. The Auditor General for Wales gave an unqualified opinion on my Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21.

As a prudent accounting officer, I have detailed financial year forecasts, which I discuss with my Management Team on a monthly basis, and my Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on a quarterly basis. These forecasts examine the circumstances within which I need to operate, to deliver my ambitious strategic plan, which is based on extensive consultation with children and young people. Whilst wholly independent of government, in the spirit of transparency, I also discuss on a quarterly basis my current financial situation with Welsh Government officials, including my reserves, and the budget forecasting.

4. Achievements

My latest Annual Report, available on [my website](#), includes a detailed analysis of my office's achievements. It includes details of how our project and core (day-to-day) work has delivered against my three-year plan. Below is a summary of the major achievements by my team between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

- Engaged directly with at least 694 children and young people across Wales at online events, workshops and meetings
- Gathered the views of 44,000 children and young people across Wales through our 'Coronavirus and Us' surveys
- Held focus groups with 55 young people across Wales in a 'listening day' in November to assess the impact of the October 'firebreak' restrictions in Wales
- Gathered the views of 167 head teachers and college principals in one week in January on digital inclusion
- Hosted online children's rights lessons for 864 children and young people
- Secured nearly 10,000 votes in the country's first parallel Senedd election for 11-15 year olds.
- Hosted training sessions on children's rights for over 800 participants
- Responded to at least 30 Senedd, Welsh Government and other organisations' consultations, creating tangible change in a number of new policies and legislation.
- Published 11 thematic reports on topics ranging from inclusion in the foundation phase to a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Managed 663 cases through our Investigations and Advice service

- Secured at least 449 pieces of broadcast and print coverage for the organisation
- Worked with at least 148 working groups and organisations on a range of children's rights issues and increased our engagement with some critical organisations, including education consortia, third sector organisations and teaching unions.

In addition to planned work, like other public service organisations, my small staff team made a significant contribution to the national response of the Covid-19 pandemic by taking on further significant pieces of work. Our experienced and highly skilled workforce went above and beyond their existing work plans and took on additional duties to deliver time-critical pieces of work during the pandemic. You'll be able to read about the various outputs and impact in our two 'Coronavirus and Us' reports, also available on our [website](#). Highlights of our contribution are as follows:

a) We led, analysed and reported on two large surveys of 44,000 children's experiences in partnership with Welsh Government and willingly volunteered to absorb additional costs of this work of £43,000 (not including considerable staffing time) from our general fund without requesting additional grant aid from the government.

b) We built an area of our website from scratch to host the '*Summer of Fun*' national information resource for parents, carers and young people to find out about Welsh Government-funded activities running in each local authority. We will be repeating this service for the '*Winter of Wellbeing*' Welsh Government funded activities from October 2021-March 2022.

c) We worked with Welsh Government officials on an almost daily basis during 2020-21 to influence rapidly changing government guidance by providing swift feedback and suggested amends, informing impact assessments and from time to time facilitating consultation sessions with children and young people for Ministers and senior officials.

d) In the first week of the lockdown in March 2020 we developed a trusted source of information for children and families through our bilingual Coronavirus Information Hub, which we have kept updated.

We estimate that the 'Coronavirus and Me' survey work, analysis and reports (including tailored, bilingual reports to all 22 local authorities), plus the 'Summer of Fun and 'Winter of Wellbeing' web-pages would have the cost the Welsh Government over £100,000 in 2020-22 if they had procured these from another organisation. We have regarded these as our contribution to the national emergency as a public service.

In 2020-21, we also undertook a statutory Review of Welsh Government's exercise of its functions. This was the first review of its kind and initiated quickly following a decision by the government not to continue with a planned legislative change. We managed to complete this substantial report swiftly and with minimal budget spend by undertaking a paper-based exercise using existing staff resource.

In July 2021, we moved to a new, more modern office in Port Talbot following the end of a 20-year lease on the previous office in Llansamlet, Swansea. There were four driving factors my team pursued as part of our work to find alternative office premises. We wanted it to be

accessible, we wanted it to be sustainable, we wanted it to work for our staff team and we wanted it to deliver the best value for the public purse. We've delivered on all four.

We are now in a prime position to be able to establish ourselves as a real public sector hub in the heart of Port Talbot. We are in a sustainable building, accessible to all via solid public transport infrastructure, a suitable and safe space for staff, and cost savings of £56,000 from the figure of our dilapidations provision, and on average a saving of £20,000 per year on rates and rental costs.

The immediate savings, secured following negotiations by my team with our previous landlord, has resulted in us covering all office move costs, all capital costs relating to our new accommodation, (including audio-visual equipment to facilitate safe blended working arrangements) and two new projects: one related to the implementation of the ALNET Act and the other to run a parallel children's election for the local elections in 2022.

5. Discussion and impact on general fund

Since becoming Commissioner, and as noted in previous estimate submissions, I have reduced the level of reserves held, in accordance with my policy on general funds. I am committed to ensuring that I maintain a positive balance on the general fund to enable me to have in-year flexibility to meet additional costs but, importantly, to respond at short notice to any potential inquiry or examination, including the examination of Welsh Ministers' activity. The Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 reported that the level of the general fund was £51,000. I anticipate a similar figure in my general fund at the end of the financial year 2021-22, which includes some balance from the dilapidations provision discussed above. Over the last few years, the prudent use of my general fund has allowed me to sustain a high level of output and impact by my office. The current level of general fund, which meets the expectations of the Welsh Government's requirements under the alignment exercise, means that my office requires more funds to sustain our activities in 2022-23.

6. Underlying Assumptions

In completing this estimate I have made a number of assumptions regarding the forecast costs for the financial periods, these are:

- I have used a figure of two percent for **inflationary increases** for some of the costs likely to be impacted by inflation.
- My pay policy is to mirror Civil Service pay awards for my organisation. I have received information about the Civil Service pay award for 2021-22 and have also allowed for an estimated 1.5% average pay award for 2022-23.

I believe this estimate is an accurate reflection of the needs of this independent human rights institution for Wales that will enable it to continue to deliver impact and outcomes for children and young people in Wales.

—
**Equality and Social Justice
Committee**

Jane Hutt MS
Minister for Social Justice

Senedd Cymru

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21st December 2021

Dear Jane,

Creation of a women's residential centre in Wales

As part of the Committee's forward work programme considerations, the Committee agreed to write seeking clarification on the creation of a women's residential centre in south Wales. The Committee would welcome an update on:

- how plans for the creation of a women's residential centre in south Wales are progressing including anticipated timescales; and
- details of any engagement between the Welsh Government (at both ministerial and official) level and the Ministry of Justice on this matter.

I would welcome a response by **14 January 2022**.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

18 January 2022

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2021, regarding the creation of a women's residential centre in South Wales.

The proposed Residential Women's Centre (RWC) remains a key element of the Female Offender Blueprint and the Welsh Government continues to work closely with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) on this important programme of work.

The strong partnership approach between Welsh Government, MoJ, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and Police & Crime Commissioners has and continues to be pivotal to the ongoing implementation of the Blueprint and the development of the RWC.

MOJ have been working closely with Welsh Government, Local Authorities and a wide range of local partners to identify a suitable site in South Wales which will provide a therapeutic and rehabilitative service for vulnerable women in the local area. A site search has been underway over the last few months and feasibility assessments have been carried out on sites potentially suitable for the development of a residential women's centre. This work is ongoing and we anticipate that more information on timescales should be available once this assessment work is complete.

My officials continue to attend key governance meetings with HMPPS and relevant partners, including representation at the dedicated Project Board for the RWC in Wales. Since the announcement on the RWC being sited in Wales in May 2020, I have regularly engaged with UK Justice Ministers, and I am due to meet with Victoria Atkins, Minister for Prisons and Probation at the end of this month.

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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.

As outlined in my written statement of the 8 November 2021, which provided an update on the Blueprints and Justice related matters, I will keep members informed of progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter of "Jane".

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

Mark Drakeford MS
First Minister of Wales

December 21st 2021

Dear Mark,

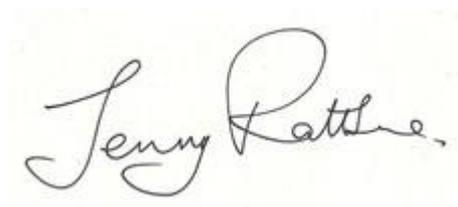
Forward work planning and scoping – data justice

As part of the committee's forward work programme considerations, the committee agreed to write seeking clarification on the following data protection and data justice questions. Your response will help to inform future scoping work that the Committee may undertake.

- Which Minister is responsible for control of data, biometric data, and digital rights?
- To what extent does the Welsh Government and the public sector use data-driven processes (such as algorithms and predictive analytics) to inform public sector planning and policy-making? Please provide examples.
- What is the Welsh Government's view of Scotland's decision to create a Biometrics Commissioner?
- Please set out the Welsh government's view on the regulatory framework governing the use of data including how it relates to the devolved settlement, the efficacy of existing arrangements, and the implications of Brexit for these arrangements in future.
- Can you supply a register or list of Data Protection Impact Assessments made by the Welsh Government so that requests can be made to see those of most interest?
- Did the Welsh Government respond to the UK Government '[Data a New Direction](#)' consultation, and will that response be made public?

I would welcome a response by **14 January 2022**.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

18 January 2022

Dear Chair,

I am writing in response to your letter of 21 December seeking clarification on a number of data protection and data justice issues in Wales. Taking your questions in turn:

There is no single Welsh Minister responsible for the control of data, biometric data, and digital rights because these are policy areas which are not devolved to Wales. These are reserved matters by the UK Government.

As outlined in our Digital Strategy for Wales, we are keen to promote the use of data-driven innovation to support decision making and planning. This may include the use of new techniques such as predictive analytics where they can be effective in improving the lives of citizens. However, we are committed that in considering the use of data for such purposes it must be secure, ethical and fair.

Within the Welsh Government, we are using some data-driven processes to inform public sector planning and policy-making. [DataMapWales](#), the geospatial platform, has been used to make decisions extensively during the pandemic, for example, in identifying vaccination centres and drive times for temporary hospitals. It is being used by local authorities in Wales to consult on active travel plans, bringing together a Wales-wide view of proposals for the first time. DataMapWales is also being used as part of a service (called JIGSO) to provide the Welsh emergency responder community with up-to-date information to help them prioritise responses in an emergency situation.

DataMapWales has been designed to allow re-use of the data, enabling both the public and private sector to consume services that can be used as part of economic analysis/reporting. This is done in a safe and secure way.

The Welsh Government's Smart Towns project, delivered by Menter Mon, is helping both public and private sector organisations learn how to utilise data. By using emerging technologies such as LoRaWAN and established technologies like WiFi they are able to deploy sensors to collect anonymised data to better understand their customer base and trends in footfall for example.

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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.

On your point about Scotland's decision to create a Biometric Commissioner, the UK Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner covers both Welsh and English Police Forces and provides independent oversight related to the use by police of DNA samples, DNA profiles and fingerprints.

The Welsh Government supports the effective and responsible use of biometric data although, as stated above, biometric data policy is a non-devolved matter.

On your question about the regulatory framework around data protection, we believe that it currently works and a key aspect of this is the practical implementation and guidance produced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). We have a constructive relationship with the ICO. There are also constructive relationships with the UK Government on data policy through various governance groups which underpin the delivery of the UK National Data Strategy, providing the opportunity for devolved governments to contribute to and understand emerging thinking.

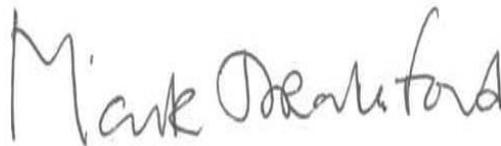
On Brexit data implications, one of the biggest risks was the ability of the UK to secure an Adequacy Agreement with the EU to allow the free flow of information between the UK and the EU. This risk did not materialise as the UK secured the necessary Agreement. There is a new risk if changes are made to UK law on data flows which could put that Agreement at risk. We have drawn this to the attention of the UK government who remain responsible for actions in this area and we are able to monitor developments from a Welsh perspective. Changes which undermine the independence of the ICO would be of concern to Wales, particularly the way GDPR operates.

The Welsh Government does not hold a central list or register of Data Protection Impact Assessments.

The Welsh Government did respond to the UK Government consultation "Data a New Direction". The UK Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner also responded and his response is published [here](#). A copy of the Welsh Government response to the consultation is attached and will be published on the Welsh Government website.

I trust this response helps shape the Committee's work plan moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee
Chair, Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations
Committee
Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Chair, Finance Committee
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee
Chair, Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

21 December 2021

Dear Chair

Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement

Last week our report on the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement between Senedd Cymru and the Welsh Government was noted by the Senedd.

I would like to draw your attention to this report, which includes the Agreement.

The Agreement represents the agreed position of the Senedd and the Welsh Government on the information that the Welsh Government will, where appropriate, provide to the Senedd with regard to its participation in formal, ministerial-level inter-governmental meetings, agreements, concordats, and memorandums of understanding.

The Agreement is intended to support the Senedd's capacity to scrutinise Welsh Government activity



and to hold the Welsh Ministers to account in the intergovernmental arena. It therefore may be of interest to you in any future scrutiny work that you undertake.

Yours sincerely

Huw Irranca-Davies

Huw Irranca-Davies

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

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