

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: Monday, 24 January 2022

Meeting time: 14.00 – 15.57

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/12587>

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Jack Sargeant MS (Chair) Luke Fletcher MS Joel James MS Buffy Williams MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Gareth Price (Clerk) Mared Llwyd (Second Clerk) Kayleigh Imperato (Deputy Clerk)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. There were no apologies.



2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1226 Remove barriers to entry to Social Work and encourage parity of esteem between Social Care and Health

The Committee welcomed the fact that Welsh Government is working with the Student Loan Company and Social Care Wales to remove the barriers to student finance and agreed to:

- write back to the Deputy Minister to emphasise the need for this to be resolved quickly and seek assurances that the next cohort of students will not face the same hardship;
- ask how the Welsh Government will ensure equivalent funding between health and social work training and the timeframe to establish this, as part of the work to ensure parity for health and social work students and workforce; and
- highlight these concerns to Social Care Wales and Student Finance Wales.

The Chair noted that any changes will not impact on the petitions themselves and they wish to effect change for the future.

2.2 P-06-1227 To get a specialist mental health mother and baby unit in North Wales

The Committee agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister to share their concern about the time taken to establish this service and to seek further clarification on:

- the specific plans for the development of a Mother and Baby Unit for north Wales and where it will be located;
- the anticipated timescale for the work that needs to be carried out to develop the Mother and Baby Unit and when the provision will be available;

- how women and families with lived experience from north Wales are being consulted and involved in the development; and
- what Welsh language provision will be provided within the unit.

2.16 P-06-1233 Repeal Coronavirus Regulations and end all Covid-19 restrictions

The Committee highlighted that most restrictions will have been lifted by the end of January if the public health situation continues to improve in Wales. Therefore, as it is likely that no further action is required in relation to this petition Members agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

2.4 P-06-1236 Women should be regularly screened with a blood test called CA125 to detect for ovarian cancer

The Committee noted the history of petitions on this subject; the outcomes of the 20 year trial; and the Government's willingness to change its position if the medical advice changes. Members agreed to thank the petitioner for raising the important issue and closed the petition.

In doing so, it was agreed that the petitioner would be provided with the transcript of any plenary debates, and reports that have been published on the issue.

2.5 P-06-1237 Look at using Teacher Assessed Grades for learners unable to sit November GCSE exams as a result of a positive COVID test. Ensure fairer arrangements are in place for the May exams.

The Committee noted the impact on individual young people, and the difficulty for parents and teachers trying to support young people. However, considering the Welsh Government decision and plans for future exams there is no further action the Committee can take, it therefore agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

2.6 P-06-1238 Ban Polystyrene and other single use plastics!

The Committee noted the Welsh Government's strong commitment to bring forward legislation in this Senedd, and the cross-party support for this from the Senedd and Youth Parliament. The Committee would like to thank the petitioner for raising the issue and close the petition.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-949 SAVE COWBRIDGE OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION

The Committee agreed to write back to Business Committee confirming this is still a live matter that Members would like to be debated and the intention to widen the debate beyond the particular issues in Cowbridge to a wider consideration of preserving valued buildings.

Members also agreed to highlight several forthcoming and possible debate requests to the Business Committee.

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

The Committee noted that the Minister's letter sets out exam arrangements for 2022, the intention to build better relationships with Elective Home Education families, and the funding which is being provided to Local Authorities to support families. In light of the positive response from the Minister, Members agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

3.3 P-06-1197 Heart screenings free for all 11-35 year olds who represent their school or county in sport

The Committee considered the correspondence received from the Welsh Government and the British Heart Foundation and agreed that there is little more the Committee can do to take the petition forward. The guidance issued by the UK National Screening Committee does not recommend the screening called for in the petition. Members agreed to thank the petitioner for raising this important issue and close the petition.

3.4 P-06-1207 Start referring to Welsh cities and towns by their Welsh names

The Committee agreed to explore the idea of putting the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidance on the statutory footing by taking direct evidence from him. In the meantime, Members agreed to write the Minister to ask what consideration has been given to this.

3.5 P-06-1217 Open Long Covid one stop medical hubs / clinics

The Committee noted the Minister will be reviewing the service shortly and agreed to:

- write again to the Minister asking how this future delivery is being shaped and urging her to include the patient voice within the delivery plan and
- highlight the petition to the cross-party group on long Covid.

3.6 P-06-1208 New laws to protect rare red squirrels from habitat loss which causes population decline

The Committee noted the positive debate and the Welsh Government commitments, congratulated the petitioner, and closed the petition.

In doing so, Members agreed to write Minister asking that Natural Resources Wales adopts their approach to red squirrel conservation on Anglesey in the light of their exemplar in north east Wales.

3.7 P-06-1183 Implement a 20MPH speed limit 100 metres either side of the new pedestrian crossing in Glan Conwy

The Committee agreed to write to North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency to put them in touch with the Community Council, and in doing so, thank the petitioner and close the petition.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from item 5 of the meeting

The motion was agreed.

5 Review of the committee timetable and committee remits

Members considered the current committee timetable and highlighted their preference for moving forward.