

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 25 April 2022

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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### 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

#### Panel 1

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

Sally Jenkins, Newport City Council

Annabel Lloyd, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

Julie Davies, City and County of Swansea

#### Panel 2

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



Deborah Jones, Voices from Care Cymru

Francesca Pritchard, Voices from Care Cymru

## **4 New Petitions**

- 4.1 P-06-1249 Provide a clinical pathway, medical care, and specialists for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales**  
(Pages 1 – 8)
- 4.2 P-06-1258 Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge**  
(Pages 9 – 15)
- 4.3 P-06-1261 Invest to ensure all schools have high quality, effective internet infrastructure and connectivity**  
(Pages 16 – 22)
- 4.4 P-06-1264 For school transport guaranteed for all comprehensive children**  
(Pages 23 – 28)
- 4.5 P-06-1265 Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry."**  
(Pages 29 – 36)
- 4.6 P-06-1266 Age appropriate testing for Covid in Children**  
(Pages 37 – 41)
- 4.7 P-06-1267 Create a recall mechanism for poorly performing Members of the Senedd**  
(Pages 42 – 44)
- 4.8 P-06-1269 Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales**  
(Pages 45 – 53)

## **5 Updates to previous petitions**

- 5.1 P-05-1112 Help Welsh Communities Buy Community Assets: Implement Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011**  
(Pages 54 – 55)

- 5.2 P-06-1190 Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023**  
(Pages 56 – 57)
- 5.3 P-06-1210 Stop the Welsh Government introducing a blanket 20mph speed limit**  
(Pages 58 – 60)
- 5.4 P-06-1220 Increase funding available for Women’s Health Services, Education and Awareness**  
(Pages 61 – 62)
- 5.5 P-06-1226 Remove barriers to entry to Social Work and encourage parity of esteem between Social Care and Health**  
(Pages 63 – 69)
- 5.6 P-06-1227 To get a specialist mental health mother and baby unit in North Wales**  
(Pages 70 – 75)
- 6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from item 7 of the meeting**
- 7 Discussion of evidence – P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement**

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## Provide a clinical pathway, medical care, and specialists for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22/2201-4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1249

**Petition title:** Provide a clinical pathway, medical care, and specialists for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales.

**Text of petition:** Tourette's affects 1 in 100 children. It is not a rare condition. In Wales there is 1 specialist who doesn't see children.

Tourette's syndrome is a neurological disorder that affects the nervous system and causes tics. Tics are involuntary, sudden, and repetitive movements and sounds. Tourette's syndrome can be painful and debilitating.

Lots of people are unable to get a diagnosis due to no pathway or get discharged the same day with no ongoing medical care and support.

Tourette's isn't just swearing.

Not getting medical care and support can lead to long term mental health problems. People with Tourette's can have difficulties with anxiety, sleep, rage and social isolation.

We NEED a proper, clear, clinical pathway and access to specialist provision and medical care for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales.



# 1. Background

Tourette's syndrome is a condition that causes a person to make involuntary sounds and movements called tics. Tourette's Action states that it is estimated that more than 300,000 children and adults in the UK live with the condition.

Tics are the main symptom of Tourette's syndrome, usually appearing in childhood between the age of 2 and 14 (around 6 years is the average) and can be a combination of physical and vocal tics.

People with Tourette's syndrome may also have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or learning difficulties.

NHS Wales states that tics are not usually harmful to a person's overall health, but physical tics, such as jerking of the head, can be painful. The tics and other symptoms can improve after several years and sometimes go away completely.

There's no single test for Tourette's syndrome. Tests and scans, such as an MRI scan, may be used to rule out other conditions. A person can be diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome if they've had several tics for at least a year.

There's no cure for Tourette's syndrome, but treatment can help manage symptoms. Treatment is usually available on the NHS and can involve behavioural therapy and/or medicine.

## Neurodevelopmental services in Wales

The all-Wales neurodevelopmental service workstream was launched in 2015/16 under the Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP) programme.

Multidisciplinary neurodevelopmental teams were developed in Wales and a Neurodevelopment Diagnostic Assessment Pathway published, which includes six standards. A guidance document on the delivery of neurodevelopmental services in Wales was also published.

In November 2019, the T4CYP Programme was extended until 2022 with a refocused remit on three key areas, one of which being neurodevelopmental services. The objective for this strand of work is to 'further support health boards to implement the pathway and standards, and to support the development of a whole system response for children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions, providing an early offer for children and young people and their

families, who otherwise would be referred to the neurodevelopmental team'. [A Vision for Neurodevelopmental Support & Services in Wales](#) has been published by the T4CYP (2) Programme.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In her letter to the Petitions Committee, the Deputy Minister for Social Services states that the Welsh Government is working to improve assessment and support services for all neurodevelopmental conditions, including Tourette's syndrome, 'with the aim of building sustainable services for the future across all of Wales'.

The Welsh Government's approach will be informed by the results of a **demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services** which was due to report at the end of March 2022. The outcomes from this review will provide the Welsh Government with information to plan long term future service improvement.

The Deputy Minister notes that work has already been done to support this goal, including the publication of the [Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#) which came into effect in September 2021. The Code has a dedicated section on the provision of assessment services. This is being expanded to include other neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD and Tourette's syndrome.

The Deputy Minister has recently met with the petitioner and members of a parent support group to hear directly their experiences in trying to access services and support for their children. Welsh Government officials have also met with the petitioner and the Deputy Minister notes that they will continue to work together with the parent group as future neurodevelopmental policy develops.

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

Julie Morgan AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1249  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00052/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN  
[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

21 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January to the Minister for Health and Social Services about Petition P-06-1249 which calls for the provision of a clinical pathway, medical care and specialists for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales. I am responding as I have responsibility for neurodevelopmental services including Tourette's syndrome as Deputy Minister for Social Services.

We are working to improve assessment and support services for all neurodevelopmental conditions including Tourette's syndrome with the aim of building sustainable services for the future across all of Wales. Our approach will be informed by the results of the current demand and capacity review of all age neurodevelopmental services which is due to report at the end of March, this year

The outcomes from this review will provide us with the information we need to plan long term future service improvement. We have already been undertaking work to support this goal, including the publication of the Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism services which came into effect last September. The Code has a dedicated section on the provision of assessment services. We are also expanding this to include other neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD and Tourette's syndrome.

I recently met with Ms Reeves-Graham and members of her parent support group to hear directly their experiences in trying to access services and support for their children. This meeting followed previous meetings which my officials have also had with Ms Reeves-Graham. My officials will continue to work together with the parent group as future neurodevelopmental policy develops.

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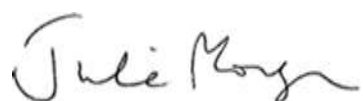
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[Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales)

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

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



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services

**P-06-1249 Provide a clinical pathway, medical care, and specialists for people with Tourette's syndrome in Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 02.04.22**

To whom it may concern,

Many thanks for letting me know that my petition is going to be considered at your next meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

I have read the document that was attached and would like to express some of my views and also add some more information for the committee to consider.

I would like to raise my concerns around the fact there are no NICE guidelines for diagnosing Tourettes syndrome. This in turn means that right from the point of contact with your GP its a lottery of wether you are referred on to see another medical professional or signposted to online information and sadly people are being turned away because there aren't any guidelines to follow and because there is an absolute lack of knowledge surrounding tourettes and other tic disorders. A NICE pathway is needed to diagnose and to treat . Having guidelines would help to ensure that wherever you are from in Wales could access the care they need.

There needs to be a huge push on training from the bottom up, starting with GPs and following through to Paediatricians and education settings. The added stress from an already very stressful situation from medical professionals not knowing anything about Tourettes syndrome is awful. Through my support group I have learnt that GPs and other medical professionals are still under the illusion that Tourettes syndrome is swearing and if the person presenting with tics isn't swearing they are then saying it can't be Tourettes. This leads me on to express my view that something needs to be done to raise awareness of Tourettes syndrome and other tic disorders. There is sadly still such a huge stigma attached and alot of misinformation. Other neurodevelopmental conditions have had their profile and awareness raised massively over the last few years and with this comes acceptance and understanding. I would love to see this happen for the Tourettes Community.

Some people are being treated for their Tourettes but very often this is only coming in medication form and can often be very strong anti psychotic drugs. We would like to see treatment including both therapy and medication and this is something Tourettes Action are working hard on.

I conducted a survey within my support group and took five families from each of the health boards in Wales and the results were shocking. The health boards are all doing different things, from who you see to who is diagnosing to the time spent waiting. Even more worrying is that even within the same health board and even within the same hospital the care varies wildly.

I have been told by the chief executive of my health board Hywel Dda that they have now started providing a pathway for people presenting with tics. I have been told that the first post of call would be to Camhs and if Camhs felt there was a neurodevelopmental condition they would then refer on to the neurodevelopmental team for assessment. Camhs is

extremely hard to access as I know first hand ,after being declined three times with them before finally my daughter was accepted, you have to be in absolute crisis and actively suicidal to be accepted and even then they have massive waiting lists. I am extremely concerned that the wait to see camhs is long if you are lucky enough to be accepted and then if you are referred on to the neuro team they also have at least a two year wait. Surely this is unacceptable and again from within my group I know that Camhs are often declining people who are presenting with tics and so the families go round and round in circles with no one to help. No one knows whose responsibility it is and seemingly no one wants to take responsibility.

If someone is lucky enough to get a diagnosis there is no after care no matter what health board you come under. Many people are being diagnosed and discharged the same day which was the case for my own daughter. We would like to see ongoing support for the person and their families. Ideally we would love to see a specialist Tourettes clinic within Wales that would offer a complete care package from therapy, access to medications, help with sleep , behaviour difficulties , mobility difficulties, managing pain and help with other co morbidities. Help and support needs to be available in ALL parts of Wales. The people that would be providing these services need to be fully trained . Access to a specialist in WALES is absolutely needed.

I would also like to raise my concerns that along with Tourettes Syndrome there is very little knowledge of other tic disorders such as Functional Neurological Disorder. The two can present extremely similar to each other and indeed it is possible to have both. The problem is without proper training and knowledge there could be alot of misdiagnosing and the treatments for the differing conditions are not the same.

People are facing huge waits to see a medical professional be it a Paediatrician, neurologist or camhs and this is completely unacceptable. Tourettes syndrome is a very complex condition. Leaving people with no access to medical care is horrendous. It can lead to depression and other mental health conditions, problems accessing school/education and the workplace and social isolation which without the correct support and care in a timely manor is going to become even more serious meaning the person and very often their families are going to need even further interventions.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward my views

Yours sincerely

## P-06-1258 Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22/2236-4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1258

**Petition title:** Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge

**Text of petition:** Living with a Chronic illness on a daily basis and could be of a benefit of having a Blue badge Card due to needing a quick, easy parking spot when in need of a toilet urgently.

Individuals with Hidden disabilities such as Crohn's and Colitis should be supported in having easy, quick accessible parking spots such as disabled parking as needing the toilet urgently.



## 1. Background

The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) scheme was introduced in 1971 under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. In 2000 the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Wales) Regulations 2000 introduced the Blue Badges scheme for disabled people in Wales.

The Blue Badge scheme provides a national arrangement of parking concessions for people who meet the eligibility criteria, and operates throughout the UK. The Welsh Government is responsible for the scheme, while local authorities are responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of the scheme.

According to Blue Badge scheme guidance an individual in Wales can qualify for a Blue Badge in one of the following categories.

- **Automatic qualification** – an individual may be eligible for a badge, without the need for an assessment, if they receive a listed disability benefit or have sight impairment.
- **Discretionary qualification** – certain circumstances might make an individual eligible even though they do not receive the benefits listed.
- **Temporary qualification** – An individual can apply for a temporary 12 month badge if they are recovering from, or awaiting treatment for serious illnesses or injuries.

The guidance highlights several reasons which alone, do not make an individual eligible for a Blue Badge and includes the example of bladder or bowel problems such as Crohn's or Colitis.

In correspondence to the Committee on 21 March 2022, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change said that eligibility is based on the social model of disability which the Welsh Government adopted in 2002, and 'is not generally linked to diagnosed medical conditions as these can demonstrate a wide range of symptoms'.

## 2. Welsh Government Action

Since 2002 the Blue Badge scheme has been subject to a number of reviews, consultations and reports which have looked at various aspects of the scheme, including eligibility criteria. In correspondence to the Committee, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters listed the following:

- In 2012, the Welsh Government commissioned **research** to consider extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments.
- The Welsh Government **consulted on an Action Plan** to modernise the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales which was published in 2010.
- **Public consultations** on changes to the scheme were carried out in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2016.
- Two specific **expert groups** were set up in 2013 and 2015 to consider issues, including extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments and for temporary mobility impairments.

Research and reviews have resulted in expansions to the eligibility criteria. The Deputy Minister for Climate Change said that ‘Wales has one of the widest eligibility in the UK and has made secondary legislation to extend eligibility to’:

- children under the age of three who have a condition that means they require bulky medical equipment or quick access to a vehicle to provide lifesaving treatment;
- those who receive specific assessments as part of their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to capture physical and cognitive impairments;
- those who due to a cognitive impairment are unable to undertake any journey without assistance; and
- those with temporary impairments that last at least a year and meet the with further assessment walking criteria.

In his reponse, the Deputy Minister also made the point that research has considered a number of specific conditions, but had reached the conclusion that it would not be appropriate to include, for instance:

Bowel and bladder incontinence relies on the availability of a toilet not parking concessions and people with such conditions can access ‘**I can’t wait**’ cards. The national Key scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with NKS locks can be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafes, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. These can be obtained by third sector organisations.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In April 2019 the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee conducted an inquiry into the eligibility and implementation of the Blue Badge

Scheme in Wales. The report made 19 recommendations, and included calling on the Welsh Government to undertake a review of the eligibility criteria, including whether there are further conditions which should automatically qualify a person to receive a blue badge. The Welsh Government responded to the Committee's report in 2019 accepting this recommendation. The Deputy Minister said that research will be undertaken in the 'near future', and will aim to:

firstly to review the current eligibility criteria for a blue badge, and in so doing, consider whether the eligibility criteria in Wales should be widened. Secondly, to review the robustness of the assessment processes for which Welsh Government has provided guidance to local authorities who administer the scheme

Pending the outcome of the review, the Deputy Minister said changes to the eligibility criteria could be considered.

Specifically on the issue of extending eligibility, the Deputy Minister said it:

is a sensitive issue that requires balancing the needs of current eligible badge holders with those who may benefit from a badge, but whose access to services and facilities is not totally reliant on the scheme.

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

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00206/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

21 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding, Petition P-06-1258 Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge.

As you are aware, the Blue Badge Scheme provides parking concessions for people who have severe challenges to their mobility to enable them to access services and facilities thus enabling them to live independently. The primary legislation is the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 which places duties on local authorities to deliver the scheme in their area. The secondary legislation is the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Wales) Regulations 2000 as amended, which sets out requirements such as the eligibility criteria, form of badge, and issue period.

The statutory eligibility criteria are based on challenges to mobility in line with the social model of disability as adopted by Welsh Government. Eligibility is not generally linked to diagnosed medical conditions as these can demonstrate a wide range of symptoms.

Further research on eligibility was undertaken on a national basis and specifically for Welsh Government in 2012. We also undertook a number of public consultations to seek views on extending eligibility. Wales has one of the widest eligibility in the UK and has made secondary legislation to extend eligibility to:

- children under the age of three who have a condition that means they require bulky medical equipment or quick access to a vehicle to provide lifesaving treatment;

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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.



- those who receive specific assessments as part of their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to capture physical and cognitive impairments;
- those who due to a cognitive impairment are unable to undertake any journey without assistance;
- those with temporary impairments that last at least a year and meet the with further assessment walking criteria.

The scheme has been subject to many reviews, reports, consultations and regulations since 2002 when the UK Disabled People Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) reported on the scheme. Further research for eligibility criteria on a UK basis was undertaken in 2007 by Transport and Travel Research Ltd and Rob Smith and in 2008 by Faber Maunsell. In addition, Welsh Government commissioned research by Halcrow in 2012 to consider extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments.

Welsh Government consulted on an Action Plan to modernise the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales which was published in 2010. We also undertook public consultations on changes to the scheme in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2016. Two specific expert groups were set up in 2013 and 2015 to consider issues, including extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments and for temporary mobility impairments.

The eligibility legislation was last amended in 2017 when the cognitive and temporary impairment criteria were included. A number of specific conditions have also been considered as possible eligibility criteria through research. However, subsequent reports have noted that they should not be included in the eligibility criteria as they are not appropriate. For instance:

- Bowel and bladder incontinence relies on the availability of a toilet not parking concessions and people with such conditions can access 'I can't wait' cards. The national Key scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with NKS locks can be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafes, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. These can be obtained by third sector organisations.
- People with mobility impairments that last less than 12 months as they would outnumber current badge holders and the scheme would be unsustainable and lose credibility.

In April 2019 the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee of the Senedd issued a call for evidence on the Blue Badge scheme in Wales and it was agreed that a review would be held with the following aims:

- Research the current eligibility criteria for a blue badge, and in so doing, consider whether the eligibility criteria should be widened.
- Research the robustness of the assessment processes employed by local authorities.

Pending the recommendations of the research, changes to the eligibility criteria could be considered.

Extending eligibility is a sensitive issue that requires balancing the needs of current eligible badge holders with those who may benefit from a badge, but whose access to services and facilities is not totally reliant on the scheme.

You may also be interested to know that following the [Blue Badge Scheme in Wales: Eligibility and Implementation Inquiry](#) in 2019, research is to be undertaken in the near future. This research aims are firstly to review the current eligibility criteria for a blue badge, and in so doing, consider whether the eligibility criteria in Wales should be widened. Secondly, to review the robustness of the assessment processes for which Welsh Government has provided guidance to local authorities who administer the scheme.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered on a light blue grid background.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

# School broadband connectivity

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22/2498

**Petition Number:** P-06-1261

**Petition title:** Invest to ensure all schools have high quality, effective internet infrastructure and connectivity.

**Text of petition:** A good broadband connection has become essential for education in the 21st century. More should and must be done to ensure our schools are equipped with the best internet connection possible to provide equality to all, wherever pupils live in Wales.

Whilst the previous Welsh Government's programme (2016-21) aimed to prioritise access to super-fast broadband, there continues to be schools where this is not the case.

I call for there to be a true Gigabit (1000Mbps Service Obligation) connection to all primary and secondary schools in Wales, ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged because of poor broadband speed in school.



# 1. Background

Broadband connectivity to maintained schools in Wales is delivered across the Public Sector Broadband Aggregation (PSBA) network. Launched in 2007, PSBA connects public sector organisations in the country to a private secure Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Wide Area Network (WAN). PSBA is Welsh Government-funded and delivered by BT.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In 2013, the Welsh Government set targets that by 2020, primary, middle and special schools and PRUs were to have 100Mbps connectivity and secondary schools 1Gbps connectivity. Subsequently, the Welsh Government reviewed the 2020 targets and replaced them with guidelines for 2018. The Welsh Government said that local authority feedback had suggested that the targets were too rigid and further upgrades may provide little benefit particularly where pupil numbers were low. The 2020 targets were therefore replaced with guidelines which aimed to provide more local control and allow local knowledge of schools to influence the decisions around increased bandwidth.

In 2019, the Welsh Government published Education Digital Standards. These say, in relation to connectivity:

Schools' requirements are based on curriculum delivery, and the administrative and operational needs of the school, which all represent very different usage patterns.

Standard A3 states:

Schools to have a broadband service that provides them with adequate bandwidth to meet their needs [...] Schools should have a service suited to the size of the school (in terms of all users – practitioners, office staff and learners), and the school's delivery needs, both now and in the future.

The Minister for Education and Welsh Language's response to the petition says that all maintained schools in Wales have been able to access superfast broadband speeds since 2019. He has provided a contact point and offered for his officials to investigate any instances where this is not the case.

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



Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00489/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
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30 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 03 March 2022, in relation to internet connectivity for schools.

I am fully committed to maintaining support for schools, through the [Hwb Programme](#), to ensure that all maintained schools have access to high quality, effective internet infrastructure and connectivity to enable equitable access to online tools and resources which can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

Broadband connectivity to maintained schools in Wales is delivered across the Public Sector Broadband Aggregation ([PSBA network](#)), with significant investment being made year on year to improve the resilience, efficiency and security of the network. We work in partnership with the PSBA team to ensure the high-speed connectivity for Welsh schools is stable, performant and evolving to meet growing digital needs and ambitions of schools.

The PSBA network provides schools with connectivity based on need, which is adjusted through dialogue with all local authorities in response to demand, rather than imposing a blanket one-size fits all approach.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring their maintained schools have appropriate levels of internet connectivity. Latest intelligence indicates, based on current usage profiles, that very few primary schools require a 1Gbps service, however all primary schools currently have a straightforward means to substantially increase their existing capacity. Should demand further exceed their current capacity there are existing processes to help facilitate upgraded connections quickly. A potential increase in the bandwidth of all schools internet connectivity to 1Gbps would require significant funding in the core PSBA Network. A move away from a demand led informed model of provision would need to carefully consider the associated costs and benefits.

Welsh Ministers have already invested over £45 million to deliver superfast connectivity to all maintained schools in Wales. Since 2019, all maintained schools in Wales have been

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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.

able to access superfast broadband speeds. The ever-improving capability of the PSBA network has already supported 177 schools, namely Secondary schools, to upgrade to a 1Gbps service to meet specific increased demands with minimal investment from the local authority.

In addition to investing in the broadband connections to schools, the Welsh Government also supported the development of a national web filtering service to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the network, which enables local authorities to protect their learners from harmful content and provide the freedom to learn without limits. So far, 21 local authorities are already benefitting from this crucial service.

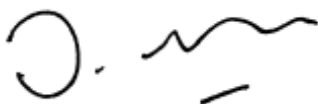
Furthermore, the Welsh Government worked collaboratively with all 22 local authorities to develop the [Education Digital Standards](#). The standards provide guidance on how schools should future-proof their digital environment to meet the needs of a more digitally focused school curriculum.

To help address any local limitations in meeting the standards, Welsh Ministers have invested £107 million to future-proof education technology infrastructure in all maintained schools across Wales. This investment has created national foundations capable of supporting and delivering real transformation to the education sector and helping to ensure digital is at the heart of the Curriculum for Wales.

In the petition from Charles Green, it highlighted that some schools may not be benefitting from super-fast broadband. If you are aware of any specific issues, I would be grateful if any supporting information could be provided to [James.thomas23@gov.wales](mailto:James.thomas23@gov.wales) to enable my officials to investigate further.

I can assure you I remain fully committed to EdTech in Wales and will be announcing further investment imminently. This investment will help further exploit the transformational benefits digital and technology can have on education and continue to ensure schools are equipped with the digital tools they need to deliver and underpin the Curriculum for Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

**P-06-1261 Invest to ensure all schools have high quality, effective internet infrastructure and connectivity, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 05.04.22**

Dear Committee Members,

Answers, to help inform your decision making:

**What are your thoughts on the attached document?**

To the lay person, the letter seems to address the issues, until you start to drill down to the facts!

Yes, Welsh Government have invested millions in Superfast Broadband (24 Mbps), which is barely sufficient for a single household (with multiple devices) in the 21st Century, not alone an entire school. Not something I would be boasting about when it comes to the education of our children (in schools) here in Wales, where pupils work with multiple devices within a learning environment who share the same bandwidth, staff and pupils alike.

**Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?**

No, while Welsh Government empower schools and local authorities to embrace better connectivity and future proof their infrastructure, only 177 out of 1500 schools have actually seen the benefit of a Gigabit connection. What is the distribution of these schools (this would be revealing in itself) to see who have taken up this connection? Where is the equality for ALL pupils within Wales's education system?

*"Latest intelligence indicates, based on current usage profiles, that very few primary schools require a 1Gbps service"*

Is this intelligence based on fact? Where is the evidence to back this statement up, have individual schools been surveyed?

*"A move away from a demand led informed model of provision would need to carefully consider the associated costs and benefits."* I would like to see equality when it comes to broadband connectivity, until this approach is taken, schools, pupils and teachers will not know what could or is possible in the new digital age. Yes, this will involve a financial cost!

**Do you have further questions in response?**

Does Wales want to be an educational leader in a digital world? Where pupils and staff can benefit and enjoy the latest IT without the barriers associated with poor broadband. However you portray Super Fast Cymru it is still limited to 24Mbps for the entire school.

**Is there anything additional that you would like the Committee to know at this stage, either in response to this document or as an update to the Committee?**

While Welsh Government have worked with local authorities and schools to develop Educational Digital Standards (I note the word SHOULD future-proof their digital environment), so a nice get out clause for Welsh Government.



Does the committee know that here in Ceredigion the local authority employs 1 Digital Development Officer (working across education, business and residential) for the entire county! I can't comment on all 22 local authorities and their approaches to broadband. But I feel unless Welsh Government improve their approach to digital inclusivity in education, pupils will be failed, as local authorities either don't understand the importance of decent broadband or just don't have the time or funds to support schools in any meaningful way.

**Update 05/04/2022**

Parent Evening at my son's school:

Had a quick discussion with the Head Teacher of Ysgol Cymraeg Aberystwyth (Primary school 300-400 pupils), told him of my sons petition for 1 Gigabit Broadband for all schools in Wales (my 9-year-old son came up with the idea, after complaining of poor broadband in school), was to be discussed by the petitions committee. To be fair, I think Head Teachers have more important things to worry about (as this, in their minds falls under the local authority), as he didn't really pick up on what I was saying.

While a teacher who over heard the discussion, plus my son's teacher both said, it's difficult to teach some lessons with continuing buffering problems (or as I like to call it, the wheel of death), and that a Gigabit connection work make a big difference in the classroom.

How many times is this situation replicated in schools across Wales? My intelligence would suggest this problem is more common than not.

If you have any further questions, please let me know.

# Free school transport

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022

Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22/2498-4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1264

**Petition title:** For school transport guaranteed for all comprehensive children

**Text of petition:** There are at least 27 children ages 11-12 that have been refused transport to their local comprehensive school. Some of these young children have medical illnesses like asthma, autism and at least 1 child has epilepsy and is expected to walk to school in all weather. These children have been separated from friends who have been able to get a bus pass, and there are only a limited number of children that have been left out. It's disgraceful.

There is only a limited number of children that have been excluded from receiving a bus pass due to laws that were brought in by the Welsh government, a government that is supposed to put child welfare at the forefront. There are 16-year-old young adults getting a pass because they were in the school before this law was changed, so while they are mature enough to find alternative transport 11- and 12-year-old children are walking in appalling weather along dangerous roads. Education is compulsory in this country and so should transport be if the comprehensive is not in the village you live. We all pay taxes, including community payments and there should not have been cuts in education provision.

Children getting to school safely, securely and dry should be a must. It is sheer cruelty making young children walk 3 miles in all kinds of weather getting soaked and sitting all day long in lessons.



# 1. Background

## 1.1. Current entitlement to free home to school transport

Under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, local authorities are required to provide free home to school transport to learners of **compulsory school age** if they live certain distances from their nearest suitable school. The distances, known as walking distances, are set out in the Measure. The statutory distances are two miles for primary school pupils and three miles for secondary school pupils.

The entitlement to free school transport and statutory walking distances originate in the Education Act 1944 which set out walking distances as two miles for compulsory school age pupils aged 8 years old and younger, and three miles for older pupils. The Education Act 1993 restated these distances.

## 1.2. Assessing learner's needs

Under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, local authorities are required to assess the travel needs of learners who are aged under 19 in their area. This includes those who they are legally required to provide transport for and those for whom they may wish to provide discretionary transport. An authority is also required to have regard to:

- The needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties;
- Any particular needs of learners who are 'looked after' or learners who have formerly been looked after by a local authority;
- The age of a learner;
- The nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.

## 1.3. Available routes

The Measure states that the walking distance should be measured by the 'shortest available route'. It sets out that a route is considered to be available if it is safe (as far as reasonably practicable) for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and levels of understanding requires this.

If a route is not 'available' and there is no alternative 'available' walking route within the distance threshold, the learner cannot be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school, even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit that applies to the learner's age. In such cases the local authority has a duty to provide the learner with free transport to and from their nearest suitable school.

## 1.4. Discretionary provisions

As well as statutory provision, local authorities have discretionary powers to provide home to school transport for other learners living or studying in the authority's area. However, if a local authority does make use of their discretionary powers, the authority must ensure that the policy applies to all learners in similar circumstances living in that authority's area. While local authorities are not required to offer free transport, examples of where discretionary transport provision might be used include:

- Children under the age of five;
- Welsh medium schools that are not the nearest suitable schools;
- Faith schools that are not the nearest suitable schools;
- Post-16 learners who continue their studies in mainstream further education or training.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In November 2019, the previous Welsh Government undertook to review the Learner Travel legislation in relation to post-16 learners. In the joint [Cabinet Written Statement](#), the Ministers for Education; International Relations and Welsh Language; Housing and Local Government and the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, said:

We agree that the current legislation that places duties on local authorities to make transport arrangements for learners of statutory school age based on distance, aptitude and safety are generally working well. However, we are aware of increasing concerns for post 16 learners where local authorities have discretion over travel arrangements.

A [Cabinet Statement in August 2020](#) said that the review was being extended to include the 4 - 16 year-old age group and the current mileage threshold for free

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transport. The review was expected to be concluded by the end of March 2021, but the review was not published due to the pre-election period leading to the Senedd 2021 elections that took place in May 2021. The [Welsh Government's response to the Children's Commissioner's Annual Report 2020-21](#) (November 2021) said:

From discussions and engagement with stakeholders as a part of the initial review, it became apparent that there are other issues with the Learner Travel Measure's current provisions that necessitate a further more detailed review. The interim report will now be published and officials will consider how best to progress the further work required to review learner travel in Wales.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2017. The Petitions Committee in the Fifth Senedd considered a petition, [Free School Transport for All Children in Wales](#). The Committee received correspondence from Ken Skates, then Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and sought the views of the Petitioner, but following an inability to contact them, the Petition was closed.

The [Children, Young People and Education Committee has written](#) to the Deputy Minister for Climate Change seeking an update on the review the Welsh Government initiated in November 2019.

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



Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00520/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

22 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 3 March to the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on behalf of the Emma Jane Granville regarding Petition P-06-1264 for school transport guaranteed for all comprehensive children. I am responding due to my portfolio responsibilities.

As you are aware, the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places duties on local authorities to assess the travel needs of all learners in their area up to the age of 19 and provide free transport for learners of statutory school age (5 to 16), to their nearest suitable school on the basis of age, distance, aptitude and safety. The local authority determines which is the nearest suitable school for each learner in their area in accordance with their school's admission policy.

An initial review of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008 took place during 2020 – 2021, concluding at the end of the previous government term. It gathered evidence and views on potentially:

- reducing the distance thresholds for free school travel;
- free travel for post-16 learners, children of nursery age and learners attending their nearest Welsh medium school and faith school; and
- revising the guidance.

However, from discussions and engagement with stakeholders as part of the review, it became apparent that a wider review of the Measure was required due to the complex nature and implications of home to school transport. Officials are now considering how best to progress the further work required to more thoroughly review learner travel in Wales during this year.

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

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[Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales)

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

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

As we undertake the further review, we will be seeking a wide range of views of the existing home to school transport arrangements and I will ensure Ms Granville's observations are fed into this important piece of work.

Ms Granville raises some very important points in the petition and I agree that the availability of transport should not be a barrier to education.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is positioned above the printed name.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

## Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry"

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: RS22/2618-1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1265

**Petition title:** Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry."

**Text of petition:**

The Minister for Local Government and Finance has decided that the name for the new single ward of Saltney Town in Flintshire shall be "Saltney Ferry". We believe that this is a decision based on an error in the Local Boundary Commission for Wales report and can result in confusion among local residents at elections.

The town of Saltney has a population of approx 5,500 of which only about 800 live in the small community known as Saltney Ferry which forms a small part of the town. Pages 65 and 66 of the Boundary Commission's report is that part that specifically refers to the background consultations and recommendations that followed of the LDBC that that led to the Minister's decision to call the new ward Saltney Ferry.

The huge majority of residents in Saltney believe this to be a ridiculous decision based on an error made when the report was written up and must be changed urgently.





## 1. Context

The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) established a legal process for conducting electoral and boundary reviews in Wales. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (“the Commission”) is responsible for undertaking these reviews. Following extensive public consultation, which includes publication of draft proposals for each County in Wales, the Commission publishes and submits its final recommendations to the Welsh Ministers.

The Commission's final recommendations are then subject to a six week period when representations may be made to the Welsh Government. It is then for the Welsh Ministers to decide how to proceed, and whether to implement the Commission’s recommendations by Order.

## 2. The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

The Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales is an independent Welsh Government sponsored body established by the 2013 Act. The Commission is able to undertake work on its own initiative, at the request of a principal council in some circumstances or following direction by the Welsh Ministers.

On 23 June 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government at the time, Mark Drakeford MS published a Written Statement asking the Commission to restart its 10 year electoral review programme. The programme would have a new prioritised timetable, with an expectation that all 22 electoral reviews be completed in time for the new arrangements to be put into place for the 2022 local government elections.

## 3. Boundary and Electoral Reviews

Over time, due to changes or shifts in population, there may be a need to make changes to boundaries of community areas or electoral arrangement in some or all of the 22 principal council areas in Wales. The Commission can make recommendations on a number of matters, including the appropriate number of elected members for each principal council, boundaries of electoral wards and whether a ward should be multi-member or not.

The Commission can make recommendations on electoral arrangements to the Welsh Ministers which it feels are in the interest of effective and convenient local government. This is set out in section 21(3) of the 2013 Act. In its [Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice document](#), the Commission notes that:

The Commission will seek to provide the best level of electoral equality for each area under review and will take each case on its merit. The Commission takes the view that departing from the average ratio for the council can only be justified by clear evidence of other balancing factors, such as local ties or other relevant considerations.

The way the Commission conducts an electoral review is defined by the Act; through its Electoral Reviews: Policy and Practice document; and by directions issued by the Welsh Ministers. The Commission’s guidance for electoral reviews sets out the procedures and methodology it proposes to adopt in respect of reviews, including around changes to electoral ward names. It notes:

Where the Commission proposes to form new electoral wards the Commission will also suggest names for the new wards. Where appropriate the Commission will propose alternative English and/or Welsh names for the new wards...

During consultation periods the Commission welcomes suggestions for alternative names in Welsh and/or English as appropriate. The Commission favours names linked to the area under consideration.

The current programme of electoral reviews is [now complete](#), with Orders made for all 22 Principal Council areas.

## 4. Flintshire County Council Electoral Review

The electoral review for the county of Flintshire began in October 2018 when the Commission undertook an initial consultation with representatives of local government in the area between 1 November 2018 and 23 January 2019. A draft proposals report for the Electoral Arrangements of the [Flintshire County Council](#) was published in August 2019.

The Commission then undertook a further period of public consultation on the draft proposals between 5 September 2019 and 27 November 2019.

The Commission’s Final Recommendations for the future electoral arrangements for the County of Flintshire was submitted to the Welsh Ministers in June 2020.

In its Final Recommendations Report the Commission notes that:

The Commission received 118 representations from Flintshire County Council, 13 town or community councils, 21 on behalf of county councillors (individually or in groups), 11 Town or Community Councillors, 11 interested bodies and 61 members of the public. The Commission considered all these representations carefully before it formulated its recommendations.

A summary of the representations can be found in the Appendix 5 to the Final Recommendations Report.

Key recommendations include:

- a council of 66 members, a reduction from its current size of 70. This results in a recommended county average of 1,809 electors per member.
- 42 electoral wards, a reduction from 57 existing wards.
- 23 multi-member wards in the County consisting of 22 two-member electoral wards and one three-member electoral ward.

A statutory six week period for making representations to the Welsh Ministers began from the date the Commission’s recommendations were submitted to the Welsh Government.

## 5. Saltney Ferry

In its final recommendations report for the Flintshire County area, the Commission recommended combining two existing wards (Saltney Mold Junction and Saltney Stonebridge) into a single ward, to be represented by two councillors.

It noted that the Commission had proposed the single language name of **Saltney** for the ward, and that the Welsh Language Commissioner agreed with the proposed name. The Commission received representations from the Council and others stressing the importance of “historic names”, and that **Saltney Ferry** should form part of any recommended name for the new ward. The Commission as a result recommended the **single name of Saltney Ferry** for this electoral ward.

Appendix 5 of the report provides details about representations made to the Commission by councillors, residents and interested parties. Two residents and a town councillor called for an alternative name to that proposed by the Commission of **Saltney and Saltney Ferry**.

## 6. Welsh Government action

In a letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, the Minister for Finance and Local Government notes the representations made by some regarding the proposed name for the ward, and that:

my officials sought confirmation from the Commission about the recommended name. The Commission confirmed its intention was for the electoral ward to be named Saltney Ferry and not Saltney and Saltney Ferry.

The Minister goes on to state that:

In coming to my decision I considered all information available, including three representations proposing the name be changed from Saltney Ferry to Saltney and Saltney Ferry. On this occasion I decided to implement the Commission’s recommendation to name the electoral ward Saltney Ferry without modification. In this case the Commission made no recommendations to change the community arrangements and therefore they remain as at present

The review process is now complete, and local authorities are currently implementing the new arrangements which, are set out in Orders, to deliver the local elections on 5 May 2022. Nevertheless, the Minister does note in her letter that whilst it is not her intention to revisit the decisions taken, future reviews will be ‘conducted on a regular basis’, and that reviews:

will be open to Members of the Senedd, the council, communities and residents to put forward proposals for change as part of any future review.

## 7. Welsh Parliament action

Orders and regulations made under sections 37 to 39, and 43 of the 2013 Act (save s.37(1) and 41(1)), are only subject to the requirements and procedures set out in

those and associated sections. In practice, what this means is that these can be thought of as ‘no procedure’ statutory instruments and, as such, they are not subject to scrutiny by the Senedd via either the negative or affirmative procedure.

It should be noted however, that the specific procedures set out in the relevant sections impose a number of scrutiny type requirements such as consultation with specified parties, time limits, and where being made other than by Welsh Government, approval of the Welsh Ministers.

The Welsh Ministers will therefore make a decision on whether to implement the recommendations of the Commission by Order, with or without modification – or not at all following a period of representation.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1265  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00157/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

28 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1265 Amend the name of new electoral ward for Saltney, Flintshire to "Saltney and Saltney Ferry."

The petition received by the Committee suggests the name given to the new Saltney Ferry electoral ward is an error and that it should be named Saltney and Saltney Ferry. Pages 65 and 66 of the Commission's Final Recommendations Report sets out its recommendations for the area in question. It includes reference to 27 representations received about the draft proposals, which are summarised in appendix five of the report. A number, but not all, of those representations raised issues with the proposal to name the electoral ward Saltney, with some suggesting the name should be Saltney and Saltney Ferry. My officials sought confirmation from the Commission about the recommended name. The Commission confirmed its intention was for the electoral ward to be named Saltney Ferry and not Saltney and Saltney Ferry.

After receiving a report containing recommendations from the Commission, including proposed English and Welsh forms of electoral ward names, the Welsh Ministers may make an Order implementing any recommendation, with or without modification, or may decide to take no action. Importantly in coming to decisions about implementation of the Commission's recommendations, the law requires that Welsh Ministers only implement a recommendation with modification where they are satisfied it is in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

In coming to my decision I considered all information available, including three representations proposing the name be changed from Saltney Ferry to Saltney and Saltney Ferry. On this occasion I decided to implement the Commission's recommendation to name the electoral ward Saltney Ferry without modification. In this case the Commission made no recommendations to change the community arrangements and therefore they remain as at present.

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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 naming of electoral wards has resulted in difficulties and delays at the end of the review process. As I acknowledged in the written statement I issued on 7 December, individuals, not surprisingly, are passionate about these names. There is often tension between names which individuals identify with and proposals put forward by the Commission. I have been clear this is an area which will need to be explored further in advance of the next set of reviews to establish what additional steps can be taken to improve the process.

The Order to implement my decision in respect of the electoral arrangements for the County of Flintshire is now in force. A link to the Order can be found [here](#).

The review process is now complete. Local authorities are already in the process of implementing these arrangements to ensure the smooth delivery of the elections in May 2022.

I note the concerns expressed by the signatories of the petition and am grateful to the Committee for passing on their views. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage people to engage with the established legal process for electoral reviews at a time when it is on-going to have their voices heard.

While it is not my intention to revisit my decision in advance of the May 2022 local government election, reviews of electoral arrangements in the future will be conducted on a regular basis. It will be open to Members of the Senedd, the council, communities and residents to put forward proposals for change as part of any future review.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Minister for Finance and Local Government

# Age appropriate testing for Covid in children

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22-2618-2

Petition Number: P-06-1266

Petition title: Age appropriate testing for Covid in children

Text of petition: I would like the government to consider adopting a different method to testing children, an age appropriate PCR test nicknamed the lollipop test. All the children need to do is to suck on a cotton swab for about 30 seconds which is a much less distressing experience for them.

I have found the testing of young children for COVID-19 a traumatic experience for both the child and the parent especially for younger children. This is only going to get worse with the flu and cold season upon us. Children who are prone to coughs end up regularly having to undergo the PCR swab test to be allowed back into school. The latter is a stressful experience, often distressing and as a parent the dilemma is whether to isolate your child even though they just have a cold merely to avoid testing. There is a better option which is used in Germany for children. It is an age appropriate PCR test nicknamed the 'lollipop' test and is highly reliable. I wonder why we do not offer this test in the UK and would ask the government to adopt it as a more humane way to test young children. We need to take the fear out of testing and now!





## 1. Background

Following advice from the Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Cell, the Education Minister Jeremy Miles announced in October 2021 that routine COVID-19 testing of children under five in Wales would stop (unless advised by a doctor). He said:

In considering the merits of testing, asymptomatic testing in particular, it is important to consider the potential harms. I have been concerned at the level of PCR testing being undertaken of children under 5 years of age which has increased fivefold since the beginning of August.

The Welsh Government therefore does not recommend COVID-19 tests for children under five unless directed to do so by a doctor, or if parents believe a test is absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child.

From 1 April 2022 the guidance on testing for COVID-19 changed. People can no longer order lateral flow tests (LFTs) unless they have symptoms of COVID-19. All PCR testing sites for the general public have closed. The guidance from Welsh Government continues to be children under 5 do not need to get tested.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Health Minister's letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee acknowledges the petitioner's concern that swabbing is an unpleasant experience for children, and says she is "open to using new technology to improve COVID-19 testing services".

With regards to the lollipop swab, the Minister explains that **the test has not been approved by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)**. Manufacturers or distributors supplying COVID-19 tests must meet the Medical Devices (Coronavirus Test Device Approvals) Regulations 2021.

The Minister adds:

We are working with Public Health Wales and health boards to introduce a different type of swab for children known as a buccal swab.

A buccal swab is a way to collect a sample from the cells on the inside of the subject's cheek. Buccal swabs are a relatively non-invasive way to collect samples for testing. We expect buccal swabs to be available in the summer.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1266  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/01112/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

30 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 9 March in your capacity as Chair of the Petitions Committee in relation to Petition P-06-1266: Age appropriate testing for Covid in Children.

I acknowledge the petitioner's concern that swabbing is an unpleasant experience for children. That is why I agreed to stop advising routine testing of children under five in October 2021. Under-fives do not need to get tested unless advised by a doctor. I am also open to using new technology to improve COVID-19 testing services.

Manufacturers or distributors supplying COVID-19 tests must apply to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for approval. Their product must meet the Medical Devices (Coronavirus Test Device Approvals) Regulations 2021. Unfortunately the lollipop swab has not been approved by the DHSC.

Information for test manufacturers or distributors who wish to apply for approval of their tests to sell on the UK market is available from GOV.UK [www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-test-approval-how-to-apply](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-test-approval-how-to-apply)

We are working with Public Health Wales and health boards to introduce a different type of swab for children known as a buccal swab. A buccal swab is a way to collect a sample from the cells on the inside of the subject's cheek. Buccal swabs are a relatively non-invasive way to collect samples for testing. We expect buccal swabs to be available in the summer.

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[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

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

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

I hope this information will be useful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

# A recall mechanism for poorly performing Members of the Senedd

Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22/ 2618

**Petition Number:** P-06-1267

**Petition title:** Create a recall mechanism for poorly performing Members of the Senedd

**Text of petition:** We call on the Senedd to urge the Welsh Government to introduce a mechanism where constituents are able to recall their MS and call a subsequent by-election, similar to the mechanism introduced by The Recall of MPs Act 2015. If a Member of the Senedd fails in his/her duty a mechanism should be in place to replace him/her.



# 1. Background

There is currently only a recall procedure for MPs in the Westminster Parliament. No such procedure exists in the Senedd, the Scottish Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the House of Commons procedure, constituents cannot trigger a recall of their MP. This power lies with the Speaker of the House, and relies on certain conditions being met.

## 1.1. Disqualification from the Senedd

The Government of Wales Act 2006, as amended by the Wales Act 2017, sets out rules for when a person is disqualified from being a Member of the Senedd. Under Section 16 and schedule 1A of the Act, a person is disqualified from being a Member under the following conditions:

- Is under the age of 18;
- Doesn't fulfil citizenship criteria;
- Has been declared bankrupt;
- Has been found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices at elections;
- Has been imprisoned or detained followed convictions (minimum 12 month sentence); or
- Has been subject to orders under part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

A person is also disqualified from being a Member of the Senedd if they are already an existing member of other UK legislatures.

If a Member of the Senedd is disqualified, that person ceases to be a Member and their seat becomes vacant. For constituency vacancies, by-elections are held. If a Member of the Senedd vacating a regional list seat was elected from a party list, the Member who fills the seat must be from that list.

## 1.2. The UK Recall of MPs Act 2015

The Recall of MPs Act 2015 is a UK Act which came into force on 4 March 2016. The Act does not allow constituents to trigger a recall process. Instead, the Speaker of the House of Commons must notify the local returning officer (known

in this process as the petitions officer), if one of three conditions are met. These are:

- Conviction in the UK of any offence and sentenced or ordered to be imprisoned or detained (if the sentence is over 12 months they are automatically disqualified from being an MP under the Representation of the People Act 1981);
- Suspension from the House following report and recommended sanction from the Committee on Standards (minimum 10 sittings days suspension); or
- Convicted of an offence under section 10 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009.

The petitions officer will then arrange for the recall petition to be open for six weeks. At least 10% of eligible registered voters in the constituency are required to sign the petition for it to be successful. People are permitted to campaign for or against the recall petition, with spending limits in place and regulated by the Electoral Commission. If the 10% threshold is reached, the petition officer informs the Speaker, the seat becomes vacant, and a by-election is required. The disqualified MP is allowed to stand in the subsequent by-election.

Since it came into force, recall petitions under the Act have been triggered on three occasions. Two of these reached the required 10% threshold, and both MPs involved lost their seat.

## 2. Welsh Parliament action

In 2014 the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee carried out an inquiry into disqualification from the National Assembly. However, the Committee did not address any recall mechanism for Members. The Commissioner for Standards handles complaints against individual members of the Senedd.

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

# Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
Petitions Committee | 25 April 2022

Reference: SR22-2618-5

Petition Number: P-06-1269

Petition title: Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

**Text of petition:** Every year, thousand of people die in Wales having missed out on palliative and end of life care. The end of life care plan for Wales was working towards fixing this, but in March it'll come to an end. Right now, there's no new plan ready to take its place. We urgently need a timeline, funding and staff to deliver a new plan. Don't let the plan run out with no replacement. Please sign today and help us make sure families in Wales aren't left in the lurch.





# 1. Background

The Petitions Committee has received the 'Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales' petition from End of Life charity Marie Curie and the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association. The petition calls for **a new strategic plan for palliative and end of life care**.

The Welsh Government's current **Palliative Care and End of Life Care Delivery Plan** comes to an end on 31 March 2022. The plan, along with the £2m funding that supports its implementation, was **extended to March 2022 due to the pandemic**.

**The Welsh Government Programme for government** gives a commitment 'to focus on end of life care'. However, **Marie Curie state** that "despite a commitment from Welsh Government to prioritise care for the dying, Wales is now set to be without a plan for those people for the first time in a decade, as a replacement is yet to be published".

## National Clinical Framework

'**A Healthier Wales**' is the Welsh Government's response to the Parliamentary Review of the long-term future of health and social care in Wales. It sets out that **a National Clinical Framework, underpinned with quality statements will guide the development of clinical services in Wales**. The current delivery plans for major conditions will be replaced with quality statements that set out the Welsh Government's **policy intent**. The quality statements will be underpinned by NHS implementation plans, supported by clinical networks and the NHS Executive.

The Welsh Government has published a **quality statement for cancer**, a **quality statement for heart conditions**, a **quality statement for stroke** and a **quality statement for care of the critically ill**.

In her letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee, the Health Minister Eluned Morgan states:

Quality statements set out the vision for specific clinical services and are underpinned by more detailed service specifications. They describe the outcomes and standards we expect to see in high quality, patient focussed services and are intended to guide what quality attributes key clinical services should aspire to and help inform the local Quality Assurance Cycle.

Unlike the delivery plans that predate them, quality statements are not intended to prescribe how services are to be organised and delivered. Health boards and trusts are the ones that plan and deliver services. Quality statements set out our policy intent and what good services look like. They set much clearer expectations for the system to respond to.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Health Minister's letter to the Petitions Committee Chair **confirms that a quality statement for end of life care will be published**. The Minister states "the Quality Statement for End of Life Care is progressing well and is being co-produced with statutory and voluntary stakeholders. It will be consulted upon with wider stakeholders over the next few months and is expected to be published in the summer".

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

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Minister for Health and Social Services**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1269  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/01108/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

22 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 March advising that the Petitions Committee has received the 'Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales' petition from Marie Curie & MNDA.

'A Healthier Wales' described how the National Clinical Framework and its underpinning quality statements will guide the development of clinical services during this Parliamentary term.

Quality statements set out the vision for specific clinical services and are underpinned by more detailed service specifications. They describe the outcomes and standards we expect to see in high quality, patient focussed services and are intended to guide what quality attributes key clinical services should aspire to and help inform the local Quality Assurance Cycle.

Unlike the delivery plans that predate them, quality statements are not intended to prescribe how services are to be organised and delivered. Health boards and trusts are the ones that plan and deliver services. Quality statements set out our policy intent and what good services look like. They set much clearer expectations for the system to respond to.

The Quality Statement for End of Life Care is progressing well and is being co-produced with statutory and voluntary stakeholders. It will be consulted upon with wider stakeholders over the next few months and is expected to be published in the summer.

Yours sincerely,

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol**  
**Minister for Health and Social Services**

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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.

## Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

Marie Curie & Motor Neurone Disease Association: Briefing for Petitions Committee

### Background and policy context

Dying, death, and bereavement have been at the forefront of the nation's attention over the last two years. Since March 2020, over 75,000 people have died in Wales throughout the pandemic<sup>i</sup>, and it is estimated almost 700,000 people have been left bereaved<sup>ii</sup>.

Covid-19 has meant that thinking about end of life – whether a loved one's or our own – has become inescapable for many of us. Albeit in unfortunate circumstances, more of us are coming to realise the importance of planning for end of life and Welsh Government have since assumed a new focus and policy prioritisation around palliative and end of life care (PEOLC). This includes a commitment to an End of Life Care Programme<sup>1</sup>.

A dedicated End of Life Care Programme is welcome news, but for the benefit of dying people and their loved ones we urgently need this commitment to be translated into practice.

In her letter of response to the Petitions Committee, the Minister for Health and Social Care highlights a 'Quality Statement'. This is a short policy intention document for PEOLC in Wales and when published, it will become one pillar of the End of Life Care Programme. The high-level Quality Statement will sit alongside a more detailed implementation/action plan, and together, these documents were due to replace the last [End of Life Delivery Plan](#) which came to an end on March 31.

We are yet to see a published Quality Statement or implementation/action plan. This means it is the first time in a decade that no strategic plan is in place for PEOLC in Wales<sup>2</sup>.

### The problem

Wales has an ageing population and the number of people dying with more than one condition is growing. By 2040, the number of people needing palliative care is expected to rise by 42%<sup>iii</sup>, with deaths at home expected to increase by over 88% in Wales and England alone<sup>iv</sup>.

Usually, around 34,000 people die in Wales each year and at least 75% would benefit from some form of palliative and end of life care<sup>v</sup>. However, for many reasons 25% of these people will not have access to the care that they need to die well<sup>vi</sup>. This leads to people dying in pain, without sufficient support, and their preferences and wishes at end of life going unfulfilled. This not only impacts the person who is dying, but the loved ones left behind.

The pandemic has created serious barriers over the last two years and resources and capacity have rightly had to be redirected to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. However, considering the projected increase in demand for EOLC, and in the context of a global pandemic, it is more important now than ever that PEOLC is prioritised.

The Minister for Health & Social Care Services states in her letter of response, "the Quality Statement for End of Life Care is progressing well and is being co-produced with statutory

<sup>1</sup> Published in March 2021, the [National Clinical Framework](#) sets out ambitions for design and delivery of NHS clinical services in Wales. It included a commitment to a dedicated End of Life Care Programme.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that this does not mean that commissioning and delivery of PEOLC services will cease in Wales, but that the strategic direction is unclear going forward and we risk losing the focus and progress we've achieved over the last decade.

and voluntary stakeholders". Marie Curie sit on the EOLC Board and is one of the many stakeholders who have been consulted during the development of the Quality Statement.

We agree that the Quality Statement is a good first step, however we understand from government officials that work on Quality Statements for all health and disease areas has been paused for review. We are also aware that this review sits within a complex overhaul of governance arrangements for various disease and service areas within NHS Wales.

Despite assurances from the Minister and her officials, we are not confident that an EOLC Quality Statement alone will be robust enough to drive forward the necessary changes we need to meet the increasing demand for palliative care in the next 20 years.

### Lived experience: Why is an End of Life Care Programme so important?

At any one time there are around 200 people in Wales living with motor neurone disease (MND), with a third of people dying within one year of diagnosis, and more than half within two years<sup>vi</sup>.

MND is a fatal, rapidly progressing disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. It attacks the nerves that control movement so muscles no longer work. It can leave people locked in a failing body, unable to move, talk and eventually unable to breathe.

Due to the rapid progression of the disease, palliative and end of life care is vital for people with MND in Wales. Access to a health and social care system which is supported by an End of Life Care Programme provides the opportunity for more people diagnosed with MND to have a better quality of life towards the end. As no two cases of MND are the same, there is no typical trajectory to end of life, making ease of access to services and person-centred care essential. Those living with MND should be able to spend their final days how and where they choose, and the End of Life Care Programme can enable this.

#### **Jon Griffiths, supports his father caring for his mother who has motor neurone disease. He said:**

"When Mum had her diagnosis, we were all in shock. We were introduced really early on to our Palliative Care Consultant alongside our MND consultant. Being able to have honest and open conversations about how the disease is progressing and planning ahead for each of the different stages has been a huge help to both Mum and to us as a family. It makes it easier each time something has to be introduced to help her cope with her symptoms.



For people like us who are living with the daily reality of supporting someone we love to have the best quality of life, it's important to me to know that the NHS is planning to constantly learn and improve the services that she and others receive to ensure the best possible care."

#### **The need for an End-of-Life Care Programme in practice is emphasised by Caroline Bidder, Lead Care Coordinator at the South Wales MND Care Network. She said:**

"Establishing a new End of Life Care Programme is vital to ensure support, control and choice for those living with MND, their families and carers. Patients need to be given the opportunity to live & die with dignity and access the best palliative care possible, all the while creating a healthy grieving process for those left behind."

#### **Lynwen Griffith, a Community Nurse and volunteer Association Visitor at the MND Association, reiterated the need for an End-of-Life Care Programme, and said:**

"Ensuring a good death needs advanced planning encompassing patient centred care, allowing the patient to be treated as an individual, without pain, in familiar surroundings and in the company of loved ones. Community care and health support must also be readily available for this to be achieved."

## What next?

We hold serious concerns around the lack of robust timeline, the amount of resource, and the number of personnel allocated to the development of the End of Life Care Programme and a new approach to end of life care service delivery across Wales.

The Minister for Health & Social Care Services announces in her letter of response that the Quality Statement will be published this summer. This is welcome news, but we believe the more pressing issue and unanswered question is when we can expect work to commence to organise, develop and deliver on the ambitions of the End of Life Care Programme in a wider sense.

For the Quality Statement to reach its potential and to enable the development and the delivery of a successful End of Life Care Programme in Wales, we urgently need to see

- (1) a clear, bold and detailed implementation/action plan
- (2) a commitment to sustainable and ringfenced funding, and
- (3) sufficient capacity/end of life care personnel within government and supporting NHS organisations e.g. The NHS Collaborative and when put in place, the new NHS Executive

Newly published findings from research led by the Marie Curie Research Centre at Cardiff University, reveals 80% of people in Wales think that end of life care should be given equal priority in the NHS as care for people in any other stage of life<sup>viii</sup>.

A successful and ambitious End of Life Care Programme gives us the opportunity to ensure that end of life care is given the same priority as care and support at any other phase of one's life. It is a positive stepping block towards ensuring that everyone in Wales has access to the care and support they need to achieve the end of life experience they want.

## Suggested recommendations for the Petitions Committee

We would urge the Petitions Committee to seek Ministerial Commitment with regards to progressing work on the End of Life Care Programme at pace.

We would suggest the below outcomes to be achieved by April 2023, two years on from initial commitment to an End of Life Care Programme.

1. Increase in EOLC programme personnel within government and supporting NHS organisations, in line with other condition and disease areas.

We would encourage the appointment of a full time Senior Programme Lead for the EOLC Programme in order to:

- Work closely with the Clinical Lead for End of Life Care and the new End of Life Care Programme Board
- Guide programme development. This must include (a) the infrastructure around the programme and (b) the various workstreams of the programme
- Develop and embed a robust monitoring framework for EOLC in Wales, aligned with agreed outcome domains for specialist palliative care in Wales for both adult and paediatric care

## 2. Ringfenced funding for the development and delivery of the End of Life Care Programme for the next three years

- A three year funding timeline has been selected to align with a rolling, three-year implementation/action plan (see below).
- Ringfenced funding for the development and delivery of the EOLC Programme has been specified to avoid resources being redirected to fund direct service provision within health boards, as has been the case during the pandemic.
- The results of the Phase 2 funding review into end of life care services, due in January 2023, should be taken into consideration.

## 3. Publication of a rolling, three-year implementation/action plan for PEOLC in Wales. This will follow on from the publication of the Quality Statement due in Summer 2022.

- When determining areas of focus within the implementation/action plan, meaningful consultation must place with patients, service users and the public, and relevant NHS, social care, academic and third-sector stakeholders.
- The [Review of Specialist Palliative Care Services in Wales from 2020-2021](#) and the [Seamless and Sustainable](#) report by Hospices UK must be considered.
- The areas of focus within the implementation/action plan should inform the workstreams of the overall programme, with each workstream

**We hope to see the Petitions Committee monitor the progress of the End of Life Care Programme and to follow up with the health minister and her commitments in Summer 2023.**

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### References

<sup>i</sup> As of 6 April 2022, 75,237 people have died in Wales since 13 March 2020. [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#).

<sup>ii</sup> It is estimated that each death leaves approximately 9 people bereaved. Verdery, A.M. et al., 2020. [Tracking the reach of COVID-19 kin loss with a bereavement multiplier applied to the United States. PNAS, 117\(30\)](#). Based on ONS stats above, we can therefore estimate that 677,000 people have been left bereaved in Wales in the same timeframe.

<sup>iii</sup> Bone et al, What is the impact of population ageing on the future provision of end of life care? Population based projections of place of death. *Palliative Medicine* 2018 – Feb; 32(2): 329-336

<sup>iv</sup> Bone, A., Gomes, B., Etkind, S. et al, 'What is the impact of population ageing on the future provision of end-of-life care? Population-based projections of place of death', *Palliative Medicine*, 2018, 32(2)

<sup>v</sup> Marie Curie, 2015. *Triggers for palliative care Improving access to care for people with diseases other than cancer*

<sup>vi</sup> MND: *What are the facts?* <https://www.mndassociation.org/about-mnd/what-is-mnd/>

<sup>vii</sup> Dixon, J., King, D., Matosevic, T., Clark, M., and Knapp, M., 2015. 'Equity in the Provision of Palliative Care in the UK: Review of Evidence', *Personal Social Services Research Unit London School of Economics and Political Science*

<sup>viii</sup> Marie Curie, 2022. [Public Attitudes to Death and Dying in Wales](#).

# Agenda Item 5.1

## P-05-1112 Help Welsh Communities Buy Community Assets: Implement Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011

This petition was submitted by Daniel Evans having collected a total of 655 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Welsh communities continue to lose community assets such as pubs and sports grounds at an alarming rate. Unlike England & Scotland, Welsh communities still do not have the statutory right to bid for assets.

We urgently require new legislation relating specifically to Assets of Community Value. We call on the next Welsh Government to immediately introduce the provisions of Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 to ensure groups in Wales have the legal right to buy & manage community assets.

### **Additional Information:**

Community assets build social capital, health and wellbeing. Losing community assets leads to weaker, more disconnected & unhappier communities

Part 5, Ch. 3 of The Localism Act 2011 granted the legal right for community groups to bid for & run assets of community value (ACV) under threat/for sale. It also requires local authorities to keep lists of such community assets. In Scotland, community groups have first refusal on these assets (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06366/>).

In Wales, however, the Welsh Government decided to not apply the relevant parts of the act that would facilitate this. Our communities are therefore being placed in a hugely disadvantaged position relative to England & Scotland.

In 2015, the minister stated that action would be taken on ACV during the 2016-21 Welsh Government, but nothing happened.



Implementing the relevant provisos of the Localism Act would hugely benefit Welsh communities desperate to save valuable local assets.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

# Agenda Item 5.2

## P-06-1190 Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023

This petition was submitted Jake Rayson, having collected a total of 1,013 signatures.

### Text of Petition:

Peat bogs and moors are extremely important in the fight against the climate emergency; sequestering carbon better than many natural landscapes, reducing flooding and providing biodiversity. We need to ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023, including imports.

### Additional Information:

Peat currently makes up 40% of growing media used by the public, and over 60% of that used in the professional sector. There are other materials such as coir, composted wood and leaf mould which can be used. Peatlands should not be mined but protected and restored.

The Senedd should protect and restore all Welsh peat bogs and moors and crucially ensure that all growing media sold and used in Wales is peat free.

- 3 million cubic metres of peat sold for horticultural use annually in UK,  $\frac{1}{3}$  from UK peatlands (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-extraction-horticulture>)
- 20 million tonnes carbon dioxide lost to atmosphere annually from UK's damaged peatlands (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-climate>)
- Peatland destruction releasing vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> (New Scientist <http://bit.ly/peatland-destruction>)
- Peatlands support many important species & unique ecosystems (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-species>)

### Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

# Agenda Item 5.3

## **P-06-1210 Stop the Welsh Government introducing a blanket 20mph speed limit**

This petition was submitted by Stephen R Matthews, having collected a total of 161 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Speed limits should be set by local authorities and should be only 20mph where necessary.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
- Mid and West Wales

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1210  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/12371/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

21 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 3 December regarding Petition P-06-1210 Stop the Welsh Government introducing a blanket 20mph speed limit.

A speed limit of 20mph may not be appropriate for all restricted roads in Wales. The Welsh Government has developed an 'exceptions process' which suggests when 20mph speed limits on restricted roads may not be suitable, based on criteria linked to levels of frontage development. Local authorities are able to review the outcomes of this process and add their local intelligence to determine whether to retain the existing speed limit along some stretches of road.

This exceptions process came from the 20mph Task and Finish Group report i.e. 'Recommendation 6: Transport for Wales (TfW) should further develop and finalise its GIS tool for identifying potential exceptions to the national default 20mph speed limit for restricted roads. This tool should take into account both the Place and Movement functions of each section of street/road. It should be trialled and refined through the Pilot Settlements project, which it was, and was further developed by TfW for Welsh Government so as to ensure that the new 20mph default speed limit on restricted roads highlighted residential and other areas of potential high pedestrian activity.'

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

**Back Page 90**  
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.

With regards to funding, as noted in my previous response, we are currently trialling 20mph speed limits in eight settlements across Wales allowing us to overcome any unforeseen issues before we press forward with the proposed national implementation in 2023. This work will provide an insight into the approach to the national rollout and indicate what financial resources will be required across all local authorities to implement the changes that will be required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is positioned above the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

# Agenda Item 5.4

## **P-06-1220 Increase funding available for Women's Health Services, Education and Awareness**

This petition was submitted by Larissa Richardson, having collected a total of 242 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Increase funding available for primary and secondary care relating to women's health issues, as well as research, education and public awareness.

Examples of issues include:

Perinatal issues, birth injuries, prolapse, fibroids, endometrioses, menopause related, period related, and the impact on mental health that couples these issues.

Areas which could benefit (examples, not limited to): Midwifery, GPs, Gynaecology, Women's Health Physiotherapy, Mental health services (eg counselling).

### **Additional Information:**

The number of women who suffer from women's health issues is significant. That said, a large proportion of these women suffer in silence.

Due to the lack of understanding, awareness and/or resource, many women's health issues go undiagnosed or mis-diagnosed, often resulting in the worsening of symptoms.

The detrimental impact on mental health is also understated and needs to be addressed.

There is a parallel issue that society and modern day cultures have normalised many women's health issues, making women feel like their suffering is just a normal part of being a woman. This needs to be addressed and these issues really shouldn't be seen as "normal".

Funding is needed to improve and augment Women's Health services, education and awareness to enable women to be seen, heard, understood and treated in a more timely manner

Funding is also needed to enable these issues to be addressed and discussed more widely in the public eye.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

# Agenda Item 5.5

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

This petition was submitted by Cardiff University Social Work Masters Cohort, having collected a total of 475 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The current Welsh Government policy is placing unnecessary hardships onto would-be social workers. Currently, social worker masters students are prohibited from obtaining a student loan and social care bursary concurrently.

We call on the Welsh Parliament to request the Welsh Government to encourage and support social work students from all backgrounds, remove barriers to the profession, and develop a greater parity of esteem between the Health and Social care workforce.

### **Additional Information:**

Social Work MA students are prohibited from obtaining a student loan and social care bursary concurrently. This results in a deficit of several thousand pounds with no support for accommodation, food, utility bills, car, and general living costs for over two years.

This places immense pressures on the future workforce and acts as a barrier to the profession. WG supports our NHS colleagues with grants to pay tuition fees in full, in addition to granting access to living costs bursaries or paid a salary. Many NHS students received the Covid payment when SW students were excluded. This is despite SW students managing caseloads in the thousands throughout Wales during the pandemic.

The lack of parity of esteem between Social & Health care is epitomised by the differential treatment among Welsh students. WG announced a record funding of £227m for the education and training of the NHS workforce. Less than 0.2% of that sum would rectify the difficulties facing SW masters students in Wales.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff Central



- South Wales Central

Eluned Morgan AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Julie Morgan AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00128/22

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

15 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 14 February welcoming the work that the Welsh Government is undertaking to remove the barriers for social work students and seeking clarification of how we will ensure equivalent funding for social work training as provided for health professionals.

We will shortly lay before the Senedd the regulations needed to make the changes that will allow postgraduate social work students to be able to access further support from Student Finance Wales. If all goes well, we expect that these will come into force from May, which will allow postgraduate students that access the bursary from Social Care Wales (SCW) the opportunity to access 'top up' finance through Student Finance Wales for the 2022/23 academic year. The Welsh Government continues to develop our wider options, working with SCW, with respect to the funding and nature of social work training to help meet future workforce demand. Whilst it is difficult to provide a definitive timeline at this stage on how these pieces of work will progress, I expect to receive further advice from my officials in the coming months. Also important here is the social work workforce plan which SCW has developed working closely with stakeholders in the sector and which it will publish in the spring.

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[Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales)

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

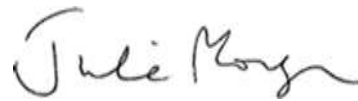
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,



**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



**Julie Morgan AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services

**P-06-1226 Remove barriers to entry to Social Work and encourage parity of esteem between Social Care and Health, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 05.04.22**

At this time, we do not want to jump to conclusions because some of the specifics have yet to be revealed. Also, the notion of trainee social workers having to accumulate up to £50,000 in student debt to practice is hardly parity of esteem with NHS bursaries. We believe there is much work to be done before social and health care students can be said to receive parity of esteem and make the profession of social worker more appealing to combat vacancy gaps and an ageing workforce.

However, this change is a welcome and positive step in the right direction. The changes in regulations to allow MA students to access student finance and a bursary will remove barriers into the profession, open up the course to those from less affluent backgrounds, and provide an option of financial relief for students and their families. Hopefully these regulations will be amended soon and these changes will apply in the upcoming 22/23 cohort, which would be brilliant news. As students who have been lobbying for these changes, we wanted nothing more than to be the last cohort to struggle in these circumstances. We are both relieved and grateful.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the petitions committee for their time, support and guidance in this endeavour.

Feel free to contact us in the future,

All the best,

MASW Bursary Campaign 2020



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**  
Social Care **Wales**

17 February 2022

Dear Mr Sargeant

Many thanks for your letter sharing the petition about student Social Worker financial support.

We are aware of the petition and are working with Welsh Government officials to inform their deliberations on the matter.

With best wishes

**Sue Evans**  
Chief Executive Social Care Wales

Cadeirydd/Chair: Mick Giannasi CBE  
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive: Sue Evans

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0300 30 33 444  
gofalcymdeithasol.cymru  
socialcare.wales

Pack Page 99



**P-06-1226 Remove barriers to entry to Social Work and encourage parity of esteem between Social Care and Health – Correspondence from Student Finance Wales, 08 March 2022**

OFFICIAL

Jack Sargeant MS,

Thank you for your letter of 14 February 2022. I can confirm we are working with the Welsh Government as set out in the letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Services.

Kind regards

Paula

**Paula Sussex | Chief Executive**

Student Loans Company 100 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G2 7JD

# Agenda Item 5.6

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

This petition was submitted by Nia Catrin Foulkes, having collected a total of 7,706 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

A mother and baby unit is needed in North Wales so that families don't have to travel to England and for this service to be available in the Welsh language. This is a essential mental health service needed for North Wales.

### **Additional Information:**

In May 2019 after the birth of my son I was admitted to the mother and baby unit in Manchester. It was very difficult for me having to travel to England far away from my family and friends in North Wales. I especially found it hard with me being first language Welsh in a hospital in England. This mental health service is absolutely needed in North Wales, because I believe that my recovery would of been quicker if I was closer to home.

Having a baby is a life changing experience and some mothers find it harder than others and it is very common for women to have difficulties with their mental health at this time. With this in mind an admission to a mother and baby unit could happen to anyone and is a essential service that is needed for many families. So therefore having this service would mean a lot to me and my family.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Clwyd West
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1227  
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00063/22  
Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

24 March 2022

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your further letter of 14 February about the petition to establish a specialist mental health mother and baby unit in North Wales, seeking further clarification on a number of concerns. Please see information in response below

- *the specific plans for the development of a Mother and Baby Unit for North Wales and where it will be located;*

The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee is working with NHS England as the proposal progresses through the necessary planning stages in NHS England. The exact location will be confirmed once the business case is agreed but I can assure you that a key condition is that the unit will provide good access for North Wales.

- *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;*

The timescales are dependent on NHS England's planning process and I understand that the aim is to achieve sign-off of the business case by late summer 2022 and for the service to be operational around 18 months after final approval. I have requested for officials to work with WHSSC to identify any opportunities to accelerate these timescales if possible.

- *How women and families with lived experience from North Wales are being consulted and involved in the development;*

We recognise the importance of engagement with those with lived experience and there will be liaison with clinicians from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and service users throughout the process. An engagement sub group will be established as part of formal

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[Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales)

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

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



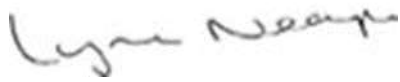
business case process. The National Perinatal Clinical Lead will also be involved to ensure that these links are as robust as possible.

- *What Welsh language provision will be provided within the unit?*

We have been clear about our expectation that the new service will take Welsh language needs into consideration, but we do recognise the challenges, particularly for services that require highly specialist staff. NHS England has committed to providing literature & signage in the Welsh language and have made a commitment to recruit Welsh speaking staff whenever possible.

Further updates on this work will be made available through our regular progress updates to the Children Young People and Education Committee on their Perinatal Mental Health report recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

## **P-06-1227 To get a specialist mental health mother and baby unit in North Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 04.04.22**

Dear Committee,

It is good to hear that the Welsh Health Specialised Services are working on new Mother and baby unit to cover North Wales, and for beds available for Welsh women who have been affected by serious postnatal mental illness like I have can access. However this means that the location is not going to be in North Wales as this is what my petition was for and still leaving only one Mother and baby unit in Wales being in Swansea. My reason for starting this petition was to get a Mother and baby unit in North Wales to make a difference for many families in North Wales and for women who can have complications while pregnant and after delivery of a baby and within the first year after birth.

With 1 in 5 women experience difficulties with their mental health services during and after pregnancy this shows the demand that is needed for treatment and potential hospitalation in a Mother and baby unit. Possible complications are; anxiety, depression, Postpartum Psychosis, Post-traumatic stress disorder, Bipolar disorder, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, Tokophobia (fear of birth), schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia all of which could be a possible hospitalation.

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health problems during pregnancy, around 12% of women experiencing depression and 13% experiencing anxiety at some point. Depression and anxiety also affect 15-20% in the first year after childbirth. Mental health complications can happen before birth, straight after and within the first year of having a baby. Suicide is a leading cause of deaths in the UK within a year after childbirth ([rcog.org.uk](http://rcog.org.uk))

Over 1400 women experience Postpartum Psychosis each year in the UK (1 to 2 in every 1000 mothers) Keeping mum and baby together is important not only for a woman's recovery but for mother-child bonding and an infants development ([app-network.org](http://app-network.org))  
Having this service in North West England means that this unit will serve:  
North Wales: Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, and areas of Mid Wales, Powys and Ceredigion.  
North West England serves: Blackburn and Darwen, Blackpool, Cheshire West and Chester, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Halton, Lancashire, Merseyside and Warrington. The population of North Wales and East England is considerably high.

North West England has two units already have two units in Wythenshawe with 10 beds and Chorley with 8 beds. When I needed a bed in 2019 a bed became available in Wythenshawe but the possible other locations were Birmingham and Edinburgh. This shows that getting a bed in a Mother and baby unit in in the UK is already hard with a national shortage, for example today Monday the 4th of April 2022 available Mother and baby on WebBeds NHS England 15 beds are available (I have attached a screen shot showing this) The area that is closest to North Wales is Medim/low today and I'm sure that these beds will quickly be taken, and then leaving many women without a option for a Mother and baby unit and then a Mum then being separated from their baby in a general psychiatric ward where the baby would be in the care of someone else for example a partner, family or social workers might get involved if there is no one to care for the baby. This is awful for a Mum to be separated from her baby and the effect on her mental health and her family is unimaginable.

It is very important to have loved ones close when in crisis which I have been through myself and my main reason for starting this petition with my experience of a hard time for me and my family and distance was a strain on us all and for me needing my family in an emergency situation was very traumatic and I'm sure that many families go through this also and is a huge stress for all involved. This would mean also that the English Government would need the funding from the Welsh Government for the cost of care of a Welsh patient in an English hospital.

Your planned proposal for this unit reinforces our reliance here in Wales on NHS England, when we could in fact use this opportunity to change this dynamic and instead lead the way. And as a Welsh woman, I feel as though I am playing second fiddle to English women and families, as my governance will have little control over the provision of our care.

So could this partnership involved in creating this unit not be more equal? Or, could it be something that Wales leads on and English families then access from us?

I am pleased to see that a timescale has now been specified and it is understandable of the process needed for a new Mother and baby unit to cover North Wales. However, it feels like a missed opportunity for us as a nation, to lead the way and that Welsh women and families are being deprioritised again. So the sooner this is done the better because this is an urgent service needed from North Wales and taking into account a lack of beds across the UK.

So I'm asking what are the reasons that the Welsh Government could not come up with the costs for a shared unit in North Wales?

With my personal situation of having Bipolar I knew I was high risk and if we want to have any more children it was recommended while I was under doctors in Manchester that I would need to be in a unit for the later half of a second pregnancy. This is therefore a very hard decision to make with the only options to be in England and a potential baby would be born in an English hospital with an English birth certificate, these plans do not currently guarantee support in my own language. I'm sure that you understand we would prefer a birthplace in Wales for a Welsh birth certificate of our proud Welsh heritage. This could also affect other families in our situation.

I am proud of my identity as a Welsh woman. But I feel that we could do so much for a nation to directly respond to the needs of our communities, particularly our rural communities, and create services of our own, without being at the mercy of another Country's needs and decision-making. It's reassuring to know that the Welsh language is being considered and should be accessible within the new unit and that Welsh beds will be protected. But I am also worried that the service being available in Welsh in an English hospital and wherever the beds will be kept for Welsh patients. It is essential for a Welsh speaking individual in a crisis situation to be able to speak Welsh, where in my experience I prefer to speak my first language at a time of mental health situations especially when I'm talking about my true feelings and needs at this time this is important for the mental health of the individual. I'm sure that other individuals in my situation would prefer to speak Welsh as well. But going back to the lack of beds across the UK this new unit might fill with English patients and therefore Welsh patients will still have to travel further a field away from support of family and friends and this concerns me because of the experience I had.

So I please ask you to think of my situation and others in my situation at this current time and in the future. There is an urgent need for a Mother and baby unit in North Wales for many families and I would not like to see other families go through the difficulties which we did in 2019. I hope that you consider having a Mother and baby unit in a North Wales hospital, with a perinatal care service already in the Ablett Glan Clwyd hospital this would be an ideal possible site. It appears that the care isn't and hasn't been in place for a number of decades and that is why you can't see enough evidence for demand to have a standalone unit in North Wales.

As I have mentioned above the lack of beds across the UK which I believe the UK Government need to do more to ensure more beds for mothers in crisis at this time of need due to various mental health complications during and after pregnancy and in the first year after childbirth. Giving support and high standard of care at a difficult time for mothers and their families and this preventing them travelling long distance for this essential service.

I have had a lot of support and messages from individuals backing me and sharing stories while I was sharing the petition on Facebook and Instragram. Also having media attention and coverage BBC Wales, S4C, BBC radio Wales, Radio Cymru, Free press Denbighshire, Daily Post North Wales, ITV Wales resulting in public support and they are supporting me and backing my petition. Also backing from MP'S and three charities NSPCC, APP (Action on Postpartum Psychosis) and FTWW (Fair Treatment for the women of Wales) who are very supportive of this petition and also agree with the points that I have raised in this campaign.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further to explore whether there are any ways that these proposals could become more equal in terms of ownership, management and therefore, access.

Committee could you please think and understand my reasons for starting this petition and all the points I have raised, I have worked hard on this and would appreciate your time of looking at my reasons and evidence of the need for a Mother and baby unit in North Wales.

Kind regards,  
Nia Foulkes