

Agenda – Plenary

Meeting Venue:

Y Siambr – Y Senedd

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 10 January 2024

Meeting time: 13.30

181(v3)

This meeting will be held in a hybrid format, with some Members in the Senedd Chamber and others joining by video-conference.

1 Questions to the Minister for Economy

(45 mins)

The Presiding Officer will call party spokespeople to ask questions without notice to the Minister after Question 2.

[View Questions](#)

2 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

(45 mins)

The Presiding Officer will call party spokespeople to ask questions without notice to the Minister after Question 2.

[View Questions](#)

3 Topical Questions

(20 mins)

To ask the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

[Jack Sargeant \(Alyn and Deeside\)](#): What assessment has the Minister made of how the Post Office Horizon scandal continues to impact the lives of residents in Wales?

To ask the Deputy Minister for Climate Change



[Sam Rowlands \(North Wales\)](#): Will the Welsh Government make a statement on Arriva changing every bus service in North Wales as a result of Wales's default 20mph speed limit?

4 90 Second Statements

(5 mins)

5 Debate on the Equality and Social Justice Committee report – Calling time on child poverty: how Wales can do better

(60 mins)

NDM8446 [Jenny Rathbone \(Cardiff Central\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

Notes the Equality and Social Justice Committee report: “Calling time on child poverty: How Wales can do better” [laid](#) on 6 November 2023.

Note: The response from the Welsh Government to the report was [laid](#) in the Table Office on 19 December 2023.

6 Welsh Conservatives Debate – PISA results

(60 mins)

NDM8447 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, published on 5 December 2023.

2. Regrets that:

a) Wales's performance has fallen to its lowest level ever in maths, reading and science tests taken by 15-year olds;

b) Wales's results were the lowest of all UK nations, for the fifth consecutive time; and

c) Wales's results were lower than the OECD average.

3. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

- a) prioritise children's education by getting 5,000 more teachers back into classrooms;
- b) ensure those with additional learning needs are provided with the right support sooner, with no cuts made to additional learning needs in the 2024–25 budget;
- c) reintroduce a form of standardised testing across schools and local authorities to help parents and teachers monitor learner progress at key stages and compare performance;
- d) develop an enhanced programme for more able and talented learners; and
- e) scrap the regional education consortia and invest savings made into school budgets.

[PISA 2022 results](#)

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 [Lesley Griffiths \(Wrexham\)](#)

Delete all after point 1 and replace with:

Notes that the pandemic impacted on PISA scores across the world.

Recognises that Wales saw improvement in literacy and numeracy in PISA 2018, however that progress has declined since the pandemic.

Welcomes:

- a) the launch of literacy and numeracy plans to raise standards in these key areas;
- b) funding to support learners with Additional Learning Needs has significantly increased over recent years and has been protected in the draft budget;
- c) that online Personalised Assessments are used in schools across Wales to support teaching and learning, and data from the assessments will be published annually to track progress; and
- d) the establishment of a National Attendance Taskforce to support schools in improving attendance rates.

[Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25](#)

If amendment 1 is agreed, amendment 2 will be de-selected.

Amendment 2 [Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#)

Delete point 3 and replace with:

Calls on the Welsh Government to:

- a) prioritise the recruitment and retention of teachers and teaching assistants, in light of EWC data that shows that 16% of schoolteachers intend to leave the profession within the next 3 years and around 40% of learning support staff intend to leave in the first 5 years;
- b) ensure those with additional learning needs are provided with the right support sooner, including through the medium of Welsh, with no cuts made to additional learning needs in the 2024–25 budget;
- c) launch a rapid review to tackle education inequality in Wales, reporting and implementing a set of meaningful recommendations.

7 Plaid Cymru Debate – Child poverty and educational attainment

(60 mins)

NDM8445 [Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes that 28 per cent of children in Wales are living in poverty.
2. Notes the correlation between child poverty and the education attainment gap.
3. Notes the latest PISA results and national report which showed that 11 per cent of learners in Wales had missed a meal because of poverty.
4. Calls on the Welsh Government to:
 - a) extend the provision of free school meals to years 7 to 11 for those households in receipt of Universal Credit, without a cap on earnings; and
 - b) implement statutory targets in the final Child Poverty Strategy to contribute to closing the attainment gap and improving education outcomes.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 [Lesley Griffiths \(Wrexham\)](#)

Delete point 4 and replace with:

Believes high quality teaching and learning is the most important school-based factor in tackling the impact of poverty on attainment.

Welcomes:

- a) a sharper focus in Initial Teacher Training on the range of approaches to teaching and learning that are needed to tackle the impact of poverty on learner experiences and outcomes.
- b) the protection in the draft budget of the Pupil Development Grant and new guidance to support schools to better target this funding.
- c) the work undertaken by the Welsh Government's Attainment Champions in sharing their experiences of tackling the impacts of poverty on attainment, and the intention to build on this.
- d) the role Community Focused Schools can play in supporting parents and families to become engaged in children's learning, and to develop the home learning environment.
- e) programmes such as Schools Essentials and the School Holiday Enrichment Programme that provide invaluable support to reduce the cost of living for families.

Notes that the PISA results found education in Wales to be more equitable than the OECD average and other UK countries, with the attainment gap between more disadvantaged learners and less disadvantaged learners smaller.

[Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25](#)

[Pupil Development Grant: guidance](#)

If amendment 1 is agreed, amendments 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be de-selected.

Amendment 2 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

In point 4, delete sub-point a) and replace with:

promote the provision of free school meals to years 7 to 11 for those households in receipt of Universal Credit;

Amendment 3 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Add as new sub-point at the end of point 4:

tackle the economic underperformance which is driving child poverty in Wales;

Amendment 4 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Add as new sub-point at the end of point 4:

improve the efficiency and effectiveness of grant-funded programmes;

Amendment 5 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Add as new sub-point at the end of point 4:

recognise that for the vast majority of children living in poverty, simple solutions focused on enabling them to get the best of mainstream education is paramount;

8 Voting Time

9 Short Debate

(30 mins)

NDM8444 [Mabon ap Gwynfor \(Dwyfor Meirionnydd\)](#)

Fail to plan, plan to fail – why Wales needs a planning overhaul

The Senedd will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Tuesday, 16 January 2024