

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Hybrid

Meeting date: 22 April 2024

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[Petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:Petitions@senedd.wales)

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

(Pages 1 – 37)

1.1 P-06-1359 Offer Welsh working parents the same financial support for childcare as England

1.2 P-06-1362 Match the new childcare offer in England of 15 hours for 2 year old's from April 2024

### 2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1397 Introduce an at-home smear test option in Wales

(Pages 38 – 43)

2.2 P-06-1398 To act to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi

(Pages 44 – 56)

2.3 P-06-1399 Health Education & Improvement Wales to make PMDD a mandatory CPD module in postgrad medical teaching

(Pages 57 – 75)

2.4 P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales

(Pages 76 – 85)

2.5 P-06-1405 We want and need a Mental Health unit for men in North Wales with beds

(Pages 86 – 93)



2.6 P-06-1407 We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law  
(Pages 94 – 104)

2.7 P-06-1412 We want the Welsh Government to keep the excellent 20mph law

2.8 P-06-1418 New legislation should be introduced to protect sports pitches from dog fouling  
(Pages 105 – 110)

### 3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-06-1209 Create a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales  
(Pages 111 – 113)

3.2 P-06-1217 Open Long Covid one stop medical hubs / clinics  
(Pages 114 – 116)

3.3 P-06-1247 We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales  
(Pages 117 – 118)

[The 4-day week: a social partnership insight \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

3.4 P-06-1299 Welsh Government 'Freeze on road building" to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life  
(Pages 119 – 122)

3.5 P-06-1338 Extend the bus emergency scheme and develop national bus recovery plan  
(Pages 123 – 133)

3.6 P-06-1348 Commission suitable NHS services in Wales for people with EDS or hypermobility spectrum disorders  
(Pages 134 – 138)

3.7 P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza  
(Pages 139 – 140)

3.8 P-06-1391 Introduce regulation of the dog grooming sector, to protect the welfare of dogs and rights of owners

(Pages 141 – 143)

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

**5 Draft report**

(Pages 144 – 162)

# Agenda Item 1

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# Introduce an at-home smear test option in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/7850-3

Petition Number: P-06-1397

Petition title: Introduce an at-home smear test option in Wales

**Text of petition:** Cervical cancer is the most common type of cancer in women under the age of 35. According to Cancer Research UK, 99.8% of cases in the UK are preventable. Smear tests can save lives by detecting any pre-cancerous changes early when treatment is more effective.

Currently there are barriers preventing women and those assigned female at birth from accessing this service. England have trialled at-home smear tests, and we believe the option in Wales can help break down these barriers and save lives.

There are reasons why women don't attend their cervical screening tests.

Including but not limited to:-

Embarrassment

Lack of education

Not identifying as a woman

Low perceptions of risk

Mistrust in health services

Cultural barriers

Concern over the procedure



Body image issues

Trauma - sexual assault, rape

Inconvenient appointment times

This was trialled in London in 2021. Dr Anita Lim, from King's College London, who lead the YouScreen trial, said:

"It is crucial that we find ways like this to make screening easier and protect women from what is a largely preventable cancer. Self-sampling is a game-changer. This simple and convenient swab means it can be done in the privacy and comfort of your own home."

Welsh women's rights Activist, Molly Fenton, says "Ideally we need a lot to change: better education, stigma breaking conversations and reassurance around the procedure, but in the short term this could save a lot of young lives. Especially 25 year olds taking that first test."

## 1. Background

Cervical Screening Wales is responsible for the NHS cervical screening programme in Wales. Cervical screening can prevent cervical cancer from developing, or pick it up at an early stage. The cervical screening (smear) test looks for high-risk types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) that can cause cell changes on the cervix.

Self-sampling means people can take their own vaginal swab, which may be done at home or in a clinic. It is not routinely part of cervical screening programmes in the UK.

This BBC article (August 2023) highlights campaigners' calls for at-home smear tests in Wales.

Cancer Research UK says initial findings from research on self-sampling are positive, but more research is needed to better understand the feasibility of introducing self-sampling into cervical screening programmes, including clinical and cost effectiveness, as well as any impact on inequalities.

A study was set up in 2021 in England as a first step in finding out if self-sampling could be offered as an alternative option alongside the traditional clinician-taken cervical screening test. This study, HPVvalidate, is collecting 5,000 samples from

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general practice and 1,750 samples from colposcopy clinics to determine the accuracy of vaginal self-samples compared to clinician-taken samples. HPVValidate is expected to report its final results early in 2024.

## 2. Welsh Parliament action

In October 2023 the Welsh Government responded to a written question asking about any plans to include at-home smear tests as part of the current cervical cancer screening program in Wales.

In 2023 the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee conducted an inquiry into gynaecological cancers, which included consideration of self-sampling for cervical cancers. Public Health Wales told the Committee that recommendations from the UK National Screening Committee (NSC) on self-sampling (following the trials) will be considered by the Wales Screening Committee when available, and Cervical Screening Wales will be guided by the outcome of these to inform any changes to the programme. The Committee concluded:

Self-sampling is an exciting development that may help address some of the reasons for not attending cervical screening appointments, such as embarrassment. We look forward to the results of the pilot studies in England and welcome the Minister's commitment to support the introduction of self-sampling in Wales, if the process is validated. However, the Welsh Government must act now to ensure the NHS is set up and ready to roll this out as quickly as possible, if approved. [...]

**Recommendation 10.** The Welsh Government should, in its response to this report, outline what work is being undertaken to ensure that NHS Wales is set up to implement self-sampling at pace, if approved. This should include details of any redirection of resources that might be necessary

The Welsh Government responded to its report in March 2024.

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### 3. Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government says that like the rest of the UK, it follows the expert advice from the UK NSC on screening matters.

The UK NSC is yet to make a recommendation on self-sampling for cervical screening and there is a lot more work to do before it can be implemented. In 2019 the Committee issued a call for more evidence into the use of self-sampling in cervical screening. The Committee is currently considering the available evidence and there are plans for an in-service evaluation that will provide the UK NSC with real world evidence on the effectiveness of offering HPV self-sampling in cervical screening.

The Welsh Government describes this as a very promising development but says before self-sampling can be implemented, we need to ensure that it is safe and effective at detecting HPV, as any reduction in the test accuracy could outweigh the benefits of better access and put people at greater risk. “Our approach will be to wait for these findings and any subsequent UK NSC recommendation”.

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-06-1397  
Ein cyf/Our ref: EM/00164/24

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

11 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January as Chair of the Petitions Committee.

I support the need to improve access and encourage more people to take up the offer of cervical screening when invited. Wales was the first UK nation to implement testing for high-risk human papilloma virus (HPV) as the primary screening test in 2018. This is a more specific test which means that a negative result is more accurate, and it will save more lives by determining a woman's risk of cancer earlier. We also have an HPV vaccination programme which offers vaccination to everyone in school year 8, with catch-up activity undertaken in school year 9 and 10. The HPV vaccine is highly effective at protecting against cancers caused by HPV, including cervical cancer. Through a combination of vaccination and cervical screening we hope to see cases of cervical cancer decline significantly.

Like the rest of the UK, we follow the expert advice from the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) on screening matters. The UK NSC is yet to make a recommendation on self-sampling for cervical screening and there is a lot more work to do before it can be implemented. In 2019 the Committee issued a call for more evidence into the use of self-sampling in cervical screening. The Committee is currently considering the available evidence and there are plans for an in-service evaluation that will provide the UK NSC with real world evidence on the effectiveness of offering HPV self-sampling in cervical screening.

This is a very promising development which, if recommended, may encourage more people to take up the offer of screening by enabling them to carry out the test themselves, in the privacy of their own home and at a time of their choosing. However, before self-sampling can be implemented, we need to ensure that it is safe and effective at detecting HPV, as any reduction in the test accuracy that might ensue from this method of sample gathering could outweigh the benefits of better access and put people at greater risk. Our approach will be to wait for these findings and any subsequent UK NSC recommendation.

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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.

I also think it is important that we recognise improvements in cervical cancer survival and mortality. One and five year unstandardised survival rates have improved to 86% and 71% respectively as of 2016-20. The age standardised mortality rate per 100,000 people has fallen from above 4.1 to 2.9 between 2002 and 2021. We are committed to continuing to improve cancer outcomes in Wales through a combination of prevention, early detection, and improved treatment.

Additionally, our Quality Statement for Women and Girls' Health sets out what health boards are expected to deliver to ensure good quality health services to support women and girls across Wales. We have tasked NHS Wales to develop a comprehensive ten-year women's health plan. This will act as the vehicle for transforming the care received by the women of Wales throughout the course of their lives.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter.

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

## To act to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/7850-4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1398

**Petition title:** To act to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi

**Text of petition:** The river Teifi is dying due to levels of pollution.

We call on the Senedd to increase the funding to Natural Resources Wales to enable it to fulfil its obligations in relation to the monitoring of the health of the river and the enforcement of legal requirements.

We also call upon the Senedd to ensure that Natural Resources Wales is held to account for its performance. This would help to safeguard the Teifi for future generations as proposed in The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

Levels of pollution on the Teifi are high. Numbers of salmon, otter and other aquatic life are in serious decline.

The Teifi is a Special Area of Conservation that is under threat from pollution and climate change. Data provided by Natural Resources Wales indicate that its poor water quality means 78% of the water bodies in the catchment are classified as poor or moderate under the Water Framework Assessment.



Similarly, large sections of the river are failing phosphate target levels and a study by Natural Resources Wales indicates the Salmon and Lamprey populations are at risk of extinction in the next 15 years.

Climate change has resulted in low water levels in spring and higher water temperatures which have enhanced the growth of algal blooms and depleted oxygen levels in the water.

In 2022 the river experienced 1,889 sewage spills from combined sewage outfalls which lasted 14,079 hours, the 6th worst river in England and Wales for sewage spill duration.

## 1. Background

The Welsh Government is responsible for water management. The [Water Strategy for Wales \(2015\)](#) is the Welsh Government policy for managing, protecting and improving Wales' water services and quality. Its vision is to:

... to ensure that Wales continues to have a thriving water environment which is sustainably managed to support healthy communities, flourishing businesses and the environment.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is responsible for managing water resources and monitoring and improving water quality - including fresh, marine, surface and underground water in Wales. It also [implements and enforces regulations, policies and permits](#) relating to water quality.

### 1.1. Assessing river water quality

The [Water Framework Directive \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) (the WFD) are the primary mechanism for assessing and managing the water environment. They place a statutory duty on the Welsh Ministers to prevent deterioration and improve all water bodies to good status by 2027.

The WFD is implemented in stages based on river basins, through [River Basin Management Plans \(RBMPs\)](#), developed by NRW for each River Basin District (RBD). The RBMPs for the current cycle were consulted on in 2019, and cover the period 2021-2027. They were [published in July 2022](#).

## 1.2. Afon Teifi water quality

Due to its important biological features the Afon Teifi and ten of its tributaries are a SAC and SSSI. The [Western Wales RBMP](#) gives a summary of the Teifi catchment, it says priority issues for water include:

... acidification, impact from historic metal mining, diffuse rural pollution from agriculture and forestry, point source pollution from sewage discharges from wastewater treatment works, intermittent assets and areas away from mains sewerage areas, physical modification and INNS [invasive non-native species].

Additional priorities include communities at risk of flooding, abstraction demands due to increasing water use and climate change pressures. NRW's 2021 [compliance assessment against phosphorous targets](#) showed breaches in the 'lower Afon Teifi SAC' against the revised tightened targets set.

The [Western Wales RBMP](#) identifies the Teifi as one of ten 'Opportunity Catchments' which "represent the strongest mix of opportunities for delivering SMNR [Sustainable Management of Natural Resources]", and will "focus staff resource across NRW's functions to support partners to deliver integrated catchment management solutions".

## 1.3. Measures to improve water quality in the Teifi

A number of NRW-led projects have been set up to improve water quality in the Teifi, including the [SAC rivers project](#), which aims to address water quality management and regulation issues in Welsh SAC rivers. It is used to identify opportunities and deliver interventions through the [Teifi Nutrient Management Board](#).

The [4 Rivers for LIFE](#) project aims to improve the conservation of four SAC rivers in Wales including the Teifi by rehabilitating and restoring their natural processes, features and physical habitats.

The [Teifi demonstrator catchment](#) project explores "new and novel ways of working, ... to seek innovative environmental solutions". It aims to develop a model which can be scaled up and replicated in other Welsh river catchments in the future. Most recently the project held a ['hackathon' event](#) to "unlock some of the challenges facing water quality and biodiversity in the Teifi catchment".

## 2. Funding NRW

NRW receives core funding for its baseline functions, and additional grant funding for projects outside those functions. A review of NRW's baseline functions found a 'funding gap', which led to the Welsh Government allocating NRW a further £18.2m in 2023-24. In the recent 2024-25 final budget, NRW's resource allocation is £88.2m, an £18.2m increase from the indicative budget.

NRW's most recent accounts show its total income for 2022-23 was £116m, including £22m of Welsh Government grants towards a range of outcomes. Additionally, the Welsh Government provided £118m Grant in Aid. NRW's total expenditure for the year was £272m, £38m more than its income for 2022-23.

In a paper to the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, NRW highlights pressures it's facing in managing increased costs. It says it's undertaking a thorough review of all activities to make further budget reductions required.

## 3. NRW scrutiny

As a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, NRW is accountable to the Welsh Ministers and subject to scrutiny by Senedd Committees. The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee undertakes annual scrutiny of NRW.

## 4. Welsh Government action

In response to the increasing pressure on Wales's aquatic environments, the Welsh Government set up the Better River Quality Taskforce (the taskforce). It has looked at evaluating the current approach to management and regulation of overflows in Wales and developing plans for change and improvement. It identified five areas requiring additional action, publishing an action plan for each area in July 2022. The action plans were updated to show progress against the actions on 24 October 2024.

There have been four river pollution summits, the first at the 2022 Royal Welsh show, and most recently in March this year, where a presentation on the progress of the Teifi Demonstrator Catchment project was given. Eight areas of intervention were agreed at the first summit, one of which was to establish nutrient management boards, including the Teifi Nutrient Management Board.

In response to this petition, the previous Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, gives further details about the '4Rivers for Life' project, she says:

Specifically on the river Teifi the project will visit over 150 farmers to provide land management advice, install approximately 25km of riparian fencing and plant around 12,500 riparian trees. There are also plans to re-meander around 3km of straightened river in the catchment, to restore natural processes and improve habitats along these sections.

The Minister also gives further details on the [Teifi Demonstrator Catchment](#) project, saying it "is about thinking differently and using innovative solutions to explore new and novel ways of working". She says the SAC Rivers projects, established in response to NRW's compliance assessment finding breaches of phosphorous levels in the Teifi:

...has identified discharges from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water sewerage treatment works and Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) as the lead contributor to phosphorus levels in the Teifi catchment.

As part of a dedicated [Welsh Government Action Plan](#), NRW is undertaking a review of discharge permits to reduce the impact from Dŵr Cymru assets. The Minister also highlights the work of the taskforce, the role of Ofwat's 'Price Review' process, work NRW is undertaking with the Coal Authority in tackling the legacy of historic metal mines, and how NRW is working to protect fisheries on the Teifi. The Minister also draws attention to the "many other activities" NRW undertakes in the Teifi catchment as part of their general duties and responsibilities, including "reactive incident response and enforcement and proactive permitting, permit compliance/inspections".

## 5. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee undertook an investigation into [sewage discharges, and their impact on water quality](#) in early 2022. The Committee's findings are discussed in this [Senedd Research article](#). It has since undertaken [scrutiny of Dwr Cymru's environmental performance](#) and 'illegal spillages of untreated sewage' from several of its Wastewater Treatment Works .

The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee undertakes [annual scrutiny of NRW](#), and scrutinises NRW's budget allocations during [annual draft budget scrutiny](#) with the responsible Minister.

The Economy Trade and Rural Affairs Committee scrutinised the Agricultural Pollution Regulations in 2021/2022. It continues to scrutinise the delivery of the regulations during regular Rural Affairs Ministerial scrutiny.

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 James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1398  
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00119/24

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

07 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January.

I would like to reassure the Committee I am extremely concerned about the impact of pollution on the quality of our rivers. Improving water quality is a complex issue which defies easy solution.

As a case in point, the Afon Teifi is under multiple pressures, including pollution from abandoned metal mines at the top of the catchment to pollution from wastewater assets, and diffuse pollution from land runoff. It is also subject to strategically important public drinking water abstractions.

Tackling pollution on the Teifi and other water bodies in Wales needs the integrated management of natural resources to maximise economic and social benefits in an equitable way, while protecting all ecosystems and the environment. These ambitions can't be realised by the Welsh Government or Natural Resources Wales (NRW) alone. We need everyone to think about how their actions impact on the wider water environment: a 'Team Wales' approach. NRW are a key player for Team Wales and with existing funding are undertaking significant work throughout the Teifi catchment to improve water quality, alleviate pollution pressures, and achieve significant, tangible, and longstanding improvements to the Afon Teifi and its wildlife.

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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.

NRW leads the '4Rivers for LIFE' project, an ambitious, large-scale river restoration project, which secured over £9 million in funding (of which Welsh Government has provided £850k per annum for 4 years as match funding) to focus on the restoration of freshwater features in four SAC Rivers in Wales: Afon Teifi, Afonydd Cleddau, Afon Tywi and River Usk. Working with partner organisations, farmers, landowners, local communities and contractors, the project is using long term nature-based solutions on the Teifi and the other target rivers to improve its ecological quality. Specifically on the river Teifi the project will visit over 150 farmers to provide land management advice, install approximately 25km of riparian fencing and plant around 12,500 riparian trees. There are also plans to re-meander around 3km of straightened river in the catchment, to restore natural processes and improve habitats along these sections. The project is tackling invasive riverine species such as Himalayan Balsam and American Skunk Cabbage, aiming to eliminate these species in some sub-catchments. This work is being delivered through local contractors as well as volunteers.

In addition to the 4Rivers for LIFE project, NRW is using the Afon Teifi for an innovative pilot '[demonstrator catchment](#)' project, supported by Welsh Government. The Teifi Demonstrator Catchment project is about thinking differently and using innovative solutions to explore new and novel ways of working, and to seek innovative environmental solutions by working together with both public and private organisations, communities and third sector organisations. It will build on work already taking place and focus on how NRW can add value and demonstrate additionality. NRW are reviewing freshwater monitoring work, looking ahead to future needs, new approaches and innovation. NRW are also seizing upon the interest and enthusiasm of members of the public and community groups that are keen to monitor their local rivers, beaches and lakes. NRW are working to develop their approach to Citizen Science to enable use of valuable data to further advance their work. I am also keen to see consideration given to using NRW's experimental powers where appropriate. NRW are actively collaborating with 16 other organisations to develop and agree clear objectives for the project and to co-develop a work programme for joint delivery. Collectively, they have submitted an Ofwat Innovation Fund entry for £2m to support delivery of interventions in the catchment. The challenge for NRW and stakeholders should not be underestimated – as it is understood the life of the project could span up to five years. While change may feel slow, the project comes at a critical time for our rivers. How we work together – as regulators, Government, landowners, businesses, and communities – will be pivotal if we are to deliver the improvements in our rivers that we all seek.

Following publication of NRW's Compliance Report in January 2021 that found the Teifi was failing targets for phosphorus, NRW established the SAC Rivers project to address some of the water quality issues across the SAC Rivers in Wales. Source apportionment studies commissioned by NRW to identify the sources of phosphorus pollution has identified discharges from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water sewerage treatment works and Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) as the lead contributor to phosphorus levels in the Teifi catchment. NRW is working closely with and has oversight on over 30 DCWW improvement initiatives and schemes in the catchment. As part of the Welsh Government's [Action Plan](#) to tackle phosphorus pollution in SAC river catchments, NRW is currently undertaking a review of discharge permits in a bid to reduce the impact from DCWW assets and to improve compliance.

Working with the Wales Better River Quality Taskforce, NRW are delivering their commitments in the storm overflow roadmap, strengthening our regulatory framework for storm overflows to ensure water and wastewater companies effectively manage and operate their network of sewers. The ambition is to deliver a resilient sewerage system that adapts to the pressures of climate change and ensures overflows operate only as required. Fundamental to this is collecting new evidence to demonstrate the impacts of overflows, as well as gathering information on emerging pollutants. The taskforce is also looking at how NRW communicates with stakeholders, building on the increased interests around water quality and recreational use.

Following years of collaborative work between the water companies and regulators including NRW, water companies in Wales submitted their business plans in autumn 2023. These business plans set out a significant programme of much needed investment across Wales. The investment amounts to nearly £1.9 billion, representing an 84% increase than the previous period. NRW and I expect that after Ofwat determines the business plans, those plans will demonstrate they will support sustainable environmental improvements for the benefit of current and future generations thus contributing to the improvements in the Afon Teifi and other SAC Rivers, CSOs and a range of other water programmes.

NRW is actively working with the Coal Authority and Welsh Government to tackle the legacy of historic metal mining in the Teifi catchment to reduce the discharge of metals from two abandoned metal mines - Abbey Consols (Teifi headwaters) & Esgair Mwyn (Meurig tributary). Welsh Government funding of approximately £5m has been allocated to implement measures to reduce zinc and lead pollution on these sites. An innovative Nautilus Pond is planned for Esgair Mwyn that will remove sediment from the discharging water, while legal advice has been secured on the appropriate means to gain access and limit risks and liabilities from the Abbey Consols site.

The Teifi's valuable fisheries are being protected and enhanced by NRW's work and oversight in the catchment. The Fisheries Habitat Restoration Plan, funded by the Sustainable Fisheries Project and Inland Fisheries Habitat Restoration (IFHR) Strategic Allocated Fund (SAF) grant award to Afonydd Cymru and the West Wales Rivers Trust, includes installation of livestock fencing to limit stock access to watercourses and promote the growth of native vegetation to secure habitat and shading benefits. As well as this restoration, NRW have demonstrated robust and effective use of their enforcement powers in respect of fisheries on the Teifi. In 2022, NRW investigations successfully shut down and brought criminal convictions against an organised poaching gang embroiled in 20 years of prolific illegal salmon fishing on the Teifi. The ringleader was ordered by the court to have £61,791.50 confiscated due to the financial gains he made from his crimes. Subsequent investigative work exposed broader criminality spanning two decades.

NRW are undertaking many other activities in the Teifi catchment as part of their general duties and responsibilities. These include reactive incident response and enforcement and proactive permitting, permit compliance/inspections - NRW aim to carry out 800 inspections on high-risk farms across Wales in relation to the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

Welsh Government ensures continuity of NRW's performance in delivering on their obligations and providing value for money through regular and robust conversations and touch point meetings. NRW are demonstrably playing their full part in working to prevent pollution and improve water quality. Despite the squeeze on public finances, they are successfully using all the resources at their disposal to prevent and minimise pollution, carrying out more inspections and prosecuting those who commit the most severe or deliberate damage.

I am confident that the Senedd will continue to provide active and robust scrutiny of NRW.

Yours sincerely



**Julie James AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change

**P-06-1398 To act to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 14 April 2024**

Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Dear Petitions Committee Members

Many thanks for providing us with an opportunity to comment on the document provided by Julie James in her former role as Minister for Climate Change and to provide further comments related to the state of Welsh Rivers and the resources available to NRW.

The letter from Julie James has clearly summarised the work that is currently being undertaken along the Afon Teifi and other SAC Rivers in Wales and we agree that a wide range of stakeholders need to work together to resolve the issues Welsh rivers are facing.

The petition was submitted by the Save the Teifi Community Group in July 2023 and we have been actively working with NRW, Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water, the Teifi Nutrient Management Board, Local Councils and West Wales River Trust to raise awareness of the issues and seek collaborative solutions. During this time we have been involved in numerous meetings, listened to Senedd debates and seen some progress. However the rate of progress is very slow and we remain concerned that the rate of change may end up being too slow to save endangered species – atlantic salmon, otter, water crowsfoot and sea lamprey are all in critical decline. We would like to draw the committee’s attention to the following points.

1. The Teifi Demonstrator Catchment Project – We recognize that this is a positive development that it is producing collaborative working. In particular the farming community is starting to engage with the project – essential if agricultural pollution is to be tackled effectively. At present however the project has no funding since the bid to the Ofwat Innovation Fund was not successful. It thus looks like this innovative 5 year project will have no funds to move it forward for the first 12 months or more. This is disappointing. In other parts of the UK (e.g. Northern Ireland) SFS funds are being utilized to encourage changes that will support river quality, climate change resilience and natural ecosystems. Whilst we recognise that the proposed SFS changes are a contentious topic it highlights that trialing innovative policies in the Teifi catchment could provide a broader Team Wales approach rather than just rely on NRW using its experimental powers within the catchment. There needs to be an immediate ban on bare over-wintered fields (such as post-maize production) and an urgent display of innovative alternatives to slurry spreading and sewage treatment – eg dessication, biogas, fuel - creating solutions across the board that benefit more than just one sector

2. Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water Investment – It was good to see that Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water have been proactive in establishing plans to significantly reduce their

contribution to phosphate levels over the next 6 years. This is however only one source of this nutrient and whilst it might be the largest contributor for the Teifi (66%) that is not true of any of the other SAC Rivers. Nutrients from landuse form a significant element and we need policies and collaboration that will reduce these sources but at the same time support our rural economies. We also need to be mindful of the fact that Wales contains many other rivers and we should be trying to enhance the quality in all our water bodies and not just the SAC Rivers. It should also be noted that Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water's response to spills from Combined Sewage Outfalls is much slower despite the growing concern expressed by their customers. Whilst the issue can not be fixed in the short term the view that it will cost too much should not be accepted. Rather a long term plan needs to be agreed to produce a sewage system fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century rather than the 19<sup>th</sup>, with a focus on decoupling rainwater from the system to ease pressure and we would also urge them to install wetlands and SUDs to hold excess stormwater.

3. Funding for NRW – It is clear that funding for the Welsh Government and local councils is stretched and we are not surprised that it is having an impact on funding levels for NRW (a freeze on replacement posts, reduced sampling/monitoring, having to prioritise pollution incidents). We remained concerned that if there are insufficient funds then NRW as the national environmental regulator is unable to perform its key activities effectively. We would thus urge the Senedd to explore new ways to support NRW. At the recent Senedd debate it was noted that when NRW take a polluter to court the fines generated from a successful prosecution go to the Westminster Government rather than the Welsh Government. We would thus urge the Senedd to demand that such fines should be redistributed to NRW, not to just cover their costs involved in the case but to also help fund the activities of the regulator. We would also support the idea of the polluter being liable for habitat restoration and biodiversity enhancement.

4. NRW and Citizen Science – As Julie James notes NRW has recently published a policy document which outlines their approach to Citizen Science. Whilst we accept that the document provides groups with a clear mechanism to identify possible projects and gain approval from NRW it is a very bureaucratic process. The citizen science group have to be supported by a reputable organization (e.g. University, River Trust, Charitable Organisation), submit detailed paperwork outlining what they intend to do and then have to wait for approval or rejection. We believe that NRW have missed a significant opportunity here. They need to recognise that citizen science provides them with a real chance to access volunteers with a wide range of skills and thereby fill in numerous gaps in the existing monitoring framework. Rather than investing staff resources reviewing proposals it would be better to invite volunteers to provide details of their expertise and willingness to participate in a range of activities. NRW should be proactive and indicate what they would like the citizen scientists to do and to provide the appropriate training to complete the task (e.g. removing invasive species, analysing data, undertaking surveys). It is a broader Team Wales approach, where NRW organizes volunteers to support their work rather than making it difficult for the community to engage.

5. Team Wales Approach – The letter from Julie James and recent Senedd discussions have made reference to the Team Wales approach. This has resulted in close working between NRW and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water. We recognise that positive collaborative working between key stakeholders is beneficial but it needs to be a delicate balance. NRW is the environmental regulator with DC/WW being a key company that it needs to regulate. The Senedd and Welsh voters need to be

confident that the relationship is appropriate and that decisive action will be taken where necessary. The water industry appears to have a complex array of regulators (NRW, Ofwat, DWI) and it is difficult to determine how effectively they work together. For example for the last two decades Ofwat appears to have placed emphasis on keeping customer bills low and allowing returns for investors rather than investment in updating capital assets which has had an impact on the environment and as a consequence working against the environmental regulator. The Senedd should be proactive to ensure the regulators are working for Wales and its future generations, not the water industry.

Best Wishes

Save the Teifi Community Group.

# Health Education & Improvement Wales to make PMDD a mandatory CPD module in postgrad medical teaching

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/7850/5

Petition Number: P-06-1399

Petition title: Health Education & Improvement Wales to make PMDD a mandatory CPD module in postgrad medical teaching.

Text of petition:

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a hormone-based mood disorder affecting 1 in 20 menstruators causing severe mental, emotional, and physical symptoms in the 2 weeks before each period with symptoms devastating each aspect of a sufferer's life. There is no cure, only symptom management. The lacking awareness and poor education within the medical community means that sufferers frequently receive suboptimal care, waiting an average of 12 years before receiving a diagnosis, thus appropriate and safe treatment.

To enable timely diagnosis and safe management for those with PMDD, requires medical professionals to have knowledge of identifying the cyclical pattern of symptoms, a current barrier throughout the healthcare system. There is no mandatory teaching on PMDD, however those wishing to specialise in menstrual disorders may opt to take a CPD module. RCPsych offer one combined module on hormones and mental health, and both RCOG and RCGP offer limited education on PMS only.





Equipping post-grad students with knowledge of PMDD will:

- Enable them to identify early warning signs of the link between mental health and the menstrual cycle.
- Allow students to provide support and encourage women/AFAB individuals to track their cycles when presenting in mental health crisis, noting any cyclical pattern of symptoms.
- Ensure a timelier diagnosis.
- Ensure all those practising have up to date knowledge of the treatment guidelines for PMDD.

<https://iapmd.org/about-pmdd>

## 1. Background

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is:

a severe form of PMS (premenstrual syndrome) defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (...) as occurring when a woman suffers from at least five out of 11 distinct psychological premenstrual symptoms, one of which must include mood.

The International Association for Premenstrual Disorders (IAPMD) say that symptoms can include depression, anxiety, mood swings, irritability, and often suicidal ideation as well as physical symptoms such as breast tenderness and bloating.

IAPMD estimate that PMDD affects 5.5% of women and AFAB (assigned female at birth) individuals of reproductive age. The Women's Health Wales Coalition estimate that around 53,445 of women in Wales are living with PMDD.

An IAPMD global survey in 2018 showed that patients in the UK waited an average of 12 years for an accurate diagnosis and saw 11 healthcare providers in the process.

Sufferers of PMDD have previously called for it to be compulsory for medical students in Wales to learn about PMDD.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In July 2022, the Welsh Government issued a Women and Girls' Quality Statement. It describes what health boards are expected to deliver to ensure good quality health services to support women and girls. Annex A lists specific health conditions that relate to women and girls that are often overlooked, such as menstrual problems. The Minister for Health and Social Services ("the Minister") said the quality statement "is the important first step in our plans to transform the care received by women in Wales" and would be followed by the publication of a 10-year women's health plan in Autumn 2022.

The Minister tasked the Women's Health Implementation Group to develop a Women's Health Plan for Wales to be undertaken in three stages. The "discovery

phase” (the first stage), resulted in the publication of a Discovery Report: Foundations for a Women’s Health Plan in November 2022. This report outlines the next stages in producing a Women’s Health Plan, including establishing a Women’s Health Network to take this work forward.

In November 2023, the Chair of the Senedd’s Health and Social Care Committee asked the Minister for an update on the Women’s Health Plan. The Minister said this is “now an NHS health plan, so this is not going quite as quickly as I’d hoped”. She added that “I do the quality statement, they do the delivery”.

On 8 March 2024, the Minister provided a progress update on improvements being made to women’s and girls’ healthcare in Wales. Welsh Government also announced the appointment of Wales’ first ever clinical lead for women’s health who will lead the National Clinical Strategic Network for Women’s Health in developing the Women’s Health Plan for Wales.

In response to this petition (11 March 2024), the Minister said:

We recognise the need to raise awareness of the existence and symptoms of PMDD and the devastating impact it may have on those who suffer from it. However, decisions about the content of training for healthcare workers, including postgraduate medical teaching, are the responsibility of the relevant professional bodies and not something in which the Welsh Government may intervene.

She also confirmed that Welsh Government:

- Is working with the NHS Executive to explore expanding online menstrual health information and guidance, inclusive of PMDD.
- Has funded pelvic health and well-being coordinators in each health board to signpost women to appropriate services.

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is a special health authority and is the strategic workforce body for NHS Wales. HEIW also develops and delivers a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events and online resources to support the needs of the NHS Wales workforce. A learning event webinar on PMS/PMDD was advertised to take place on 24 March 2024.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In December 2021, the Health and Social Care Committee (“the Committee”) published its strategy for the Sixth Senedd, which identified women’s health as a priority issue.

In March 2022, the Committee held an evidence session with the Women’s Health Wales Coalition to explore the health inequalities experienced by women and the evidence for a women’s health plan. Following this session the Committee Chair wrote to the Minister (25 March 2022) asking her to consider the key issues from the evidence sessions when developing the women and girls’ health quality statement and implementation plan. In her response, (11 May 2022) the Minister confirmed she had commissioned a women and girls’ health quality statement.

There was a Plaid Cymru debate on women’s health in Plenary on 18 May 2022.

On 19 July 2022, the Minister answered a written question asking what consideration had been given to including PMDD awareness and support as part of the women and girls’ health plan. The Minister said:

it will not focus on specific conditions, although I anticipate that it will reflect care for women experiencing gynaecological conditions such as premenstrual dysphoric disorder more broadly.

On 26 April 2023, Sioned Williams MS made a statement in Plenary to mark Premenstrual Disorder Awareness Month and to raise awareness of PMDD.

There was a short debate in Plenary on 7 June 2023 on support for women in Wales who suffer with PMDD. Replying to the debate, the Minister said:

So many women just put up with it. And it's not something that you need to put up with, and it is something that you can seek support and help for. But, actually, people need to be told it's not normal to have to put up with this (...) So, I think we have to make sure that there's better training and awareness about the condition, including amongst practitioners that, perhaps, hinder early diagnosis and treatment.

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-06-1399  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00165/24

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

11 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-06-1399 about the mandatory inclusion of a premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) within postgraduate medical teaching.

We recognise the need to raise awareness of the existence and symptoms of PMDD and the devastating impact it may have on those who suffer from it. However, decisions about the content of training for healthcare workers, including postgraduate medical teaching, are the responsibility of the relevant professional bodies and not something in which the Welsh Government may intervene.

We are working with the NHS Executive to explore expanding online menstrual health information and guidance, inclusive of PMDD. Our Quality Statement for Women and Girls' Health sets out what health boards are expected to deliver to ensure good quality health services to support women and girls across Wales and we have funded pelvic health and well-being coordinators in each health board to signpost women to appropriate services.

We have also tasked NHS Wales to develop a comprehensive 10-year women's health plan. This will act as the vehicle for transforming the care received by the women of Wales throughout the course of their lives. The plan will be developed by the Women's Health Network, which will be asked to engage with the International Association for Premenstrual Disorders as part of this process.

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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.

I hope this information is helpful for you and your petitioner.

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

Rebecca Smart.

# Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder Petition (P-06- 1399)

Written Evidence submission.



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## Foreword.

Dear members of the petition committee.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to discuss the petition on the inclusion of Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) into postgraduate medical teaching.

I wish to make it known to the petitions committee that the petition aims have already been achieved, through a collaborative partnership between Health Education and Improvement Wales, Fair Treatment for Women of Wales and two patient experts: myself being one.

A PMDD CPD e-learning module has been co-developed and will be available for healthcare and other allied health professionals, and those in medical education, on the HEIW learning module platform on April 24<sup>th</sup>. An on-demand version will be available once Welsh translation has been completed.

I would also like to pay thanks to Professor Arianna Di Florio of Cardiff University, who has, for years, tirelessly worked to push for PMDD and PME to be a mandatory part of undergraduate medical student teaching. In the weeks after the petition launched, Arianna, was informed that PMDD and PME was to be included within the core teaching curriculum and to be included in final year exams. This sits complementary to an SSC module on PMDD which provides a patient perspective and was developed by a Cardiff University medical student who recognised there was a need for further education.

To complement the ongoing work within the medical community, I have included four recommendations. These recommendations are solely patient focused and place emphasis the availability of information about PMDD, particularly through the medium of Welsh language.

Finally, I would like to thank the Health Minister for her response to the petition and for the continued work on Women's Health in Wales.

I do feel it is necessary to note that PMDD treatment does not fall within the scope of pelvic health. However, this is something that is welcomed within the PMDD community, especially those transitioning through chemical and surgical menopause, and those with co-morbid gynaecological conditions.

I would like to draw your attention to pages 3, 4, 5 and 6.

A letter of support has been provided by Fair Treatment for Women of Wales on page 7.

I look forward to your response.

Kindest regards,  
Rebecca Smart.

## Premenstrual Syndrome.

It is thought that as many as 80% of the menstruating population will experience Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) at some point in their lives.

While PMS may interfere with a woman/assigned female at birth (AFAB) individuals' life, it is more often easier to manage, not requiring medical intervention and is not life threatening.

Our society perpetuates jokes about PMS causing moodiness in women/AFAB individuals, a stereotype deeply ingrained in our culture. This stereotype is further reinforced by inadequate media representation.

Chrisler and Caplan, feminist psychologists, argue that PMS is not a biological, but a culturally bound one, similar to hysteria. They argue that the symptoms of PMS are a representation of women's frustration and anger who have a justifiable right to feel frustrated with life, having been subjected to the harsh realities of societal suppression and expectations.

## Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, an overview.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) was added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 2013, as a depressive disorder. Prior to this, it had been listed in the appendix as a condition to further study. The World Health Organisation (WHO) validated PMDD as a recognised diagnosis in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) in 2019. This provided a global acknowledgement of PMDD as a legitimate medical condition.

PMDD is a chronic cyclical hormone-based mood disorder for which there is no cure. It is thought to be a disorder of the neuroendocrine system. Symptoms are triggered by ovulation. Those with PMDD have a hormone sensitivity, causing an abnormal reaction in the brain to the natural rise and fall of the sex hormones, oestrogen, and progesterone. These fluctuations create debilitating mental, emotional, and physical symptoms that threaten every aspect of the person's life.

It is as common as diabetes in females/AFAB individuals, effecting 1 in 20 people who menstruate.

Whilst a bilateral oophorectomy (surgical removal of both ovaries) and, in severe cases, a total hysterectomy with bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (removal of both ovaries, uterus, womb, and cervix,) may be perceived as a cure, the hormone sensitivity remains. Post-surgery, people with PMDD experience prolonged periods of extreme mental and emotional anguish with minor changes in hormone levels or adjustments, compared to those without the disorder.

There are no blood, saliva, or imaging tests to diagnose PMDD. For this reason, the disorder is often overlooked by professionals or misdiagnosed as bipolar disorder due to the similar characteristics of cycling mood states. Those with PMDD go longer without safe treatments, and support and spend longer with a poor quality of life.

Diagnosis throughout the UK takes an average of 12 years, and there is a need to see approximately six healthcare professionals before PMDD is accurately recognised and treatment plans or referrals are in place.

According to Stats Wales, 1,585,674 women/AFAB individuals aged 15-49 lived in Wales in 2021. PMDD has a prevalence rate of 5.5%, it can therefore be deduced that in 2021 there could have been up to 87,212\*\* living with PMDD.

Those with PMDD are at a 50% higher increased risk for suicidality than those with major depressive disorder. 86% (\*75,002 in Wales) of individuals with PMDD experience suicidal thoughts, and 1 in 3 (\*26,163 in Wales) will attempt suicide during episodic periods (\*representative as of 2021).

\*\*There are currently no available statistics for how many are thought to be living undiagnosed or with a misdiagnosis, however a recent meta-analysis by Reilly et al. (2024), suggests up to 3.2% of the menstruating population may be living undiagnosed.

There are currently no statistics available within Wales for how many women/AFAB individuals with PMDD have died by suicide.

## My journey with PMDD.

I was finally diagnosed with PMDD in 2019 at the age of 32 after struggling for 18 years without a correct diagnosis.

During my teen years, PMS was considered a regular part of womanhood that every person who had periods would experience. What I experienced went beyond that. A hormone-sensitivity that made me want to end my life, month after month. Yet one that is shrouded in stigma of mental health and the taboo of menstrual health. One, we are belittled for speaking openly about.

During school we were taught to expect minor symptoms like feeling bloated, having sore breasts, craving certain foods, and maybe feeling a little emotional or experiencing acne breakouts. However, no one ever prepared me for the immense darkness and suffering that I would experience month after month.

I felt like I was being controlled by an entity that I had no power over, and my views of the world became distorted and dissociative. I was not aware that my hormones were not supposed to spark a war with my brain, using my own body as their battleground, with death being the goal.

Prior to receiving an accurate diagnosis, I was misdiagnosed and treated for various conditions such as bipolar disorder, personality disorder, depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, post-natal depression, complex-post traumatic stress disorder, and panic disorder. However, none of the treatments prescribed helped me overcome my symptoms.

Moreover, I was often dismissed and not taken seriously by healthcare professionals who attributed my symptoms to being a teenager from a broken home, PMS, or mere attention-seeking behaviour.

Over the years, I tried to end my life multiple times, and two of those attempts were severe enough to require hospitalisation. It wasn't until I received my PMDD diagnosis I could slowly begin to piece my life back together, but that also came at a cost.

My story is not uncommon. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of awareness about this condition, both within the medical community and society.

## Recommendations.

It is a common experience for those with PMDD to stumble upon crucial information unintentionally. The truth is, they should not have to rely on chance social media scrolling or random google searches to get informed. PMDD is a real and severe condition that deserves more attention and awareness.

If we want to ensure that patients, their loved ones, and the younger generation can access information, support, and treatment guidelines for PMDD, we need to act. That's why I propose four recommendations to complement the ongoing efforts to educate medical professionals and students. By implementing these recommendations, we can make targeted awareness and education about PMDD more widely available. This in turn, can empower people to recognise the link between hormones and mental health and provide crucial insight into recognising where changes are needed.

- Information about PMDD must be available on every health board website. It is concerning that those seeking support through the medium of Welsh face a significant disparity. While Mind Cymru and IAPMD offer some resources in Welsh, they are limited and do not adequately cater to the needs of those who speak Welsh as a first language. It is crucial that information about PMDD is through the medium of Welsh language on every health board website with links to IAPMD and Mind Cymru. This information must include "What does PMS look like for you?" to help individuals identify their symptoms. It is also essential to highlight the differences between PMS and PMDD, to empower individuals to seek appropriate care. I recommend ensuring this is available in English also but emphasise ensuring that Welsh is a priority.
- A full page on the NHS 111 website with information about PMDD. The current A-Z page has a small write-up that links to the MIND webpage, and a brief mention under the depression heading that links to the PMS page. But PMDD deserves to be recognised as a real diagnosis, with its own dedicated page on the NHS 111 website. It's time to dispel the misconception that PMDD is just PMS. This dedicated page should provide comprehensive information on symptoms, PMDD-specific treatments, details of when to see a GP, information on symptom tracking along with the menstrual cycle, and links to PMDD peer-support groups such as IAPMD, PMDD POD Wales Peer Support, and Fair Treatment for Women of Wales. This information must be available in both English and Welsh.
- Include age-appropriate education about Premenstrual Disorders (PMDD and PME) in the RSE curriculum for Wales. Educating about menstruating within the school setting is limited. My experience of lacking education throughout school is just one of hundreds of thousands. While I may have left school many years ago, these stories are still being echoed today. Young people must be made aware of what is not normal throughout their reproductive years and the impact hormones can have on their mental health. It's crucial to equip young people with the knowledge they need to recognise early warning signs of PMDD and PME. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that educators are well-informed on how to approach these topics and how to best support their students. I recommend seeking advice from patient experts and third sector organizations on best approaches to education. By doing so, we can empower students to seek help and support safely, which is vital for their well-being.
- A task and finish group. It is evident that women and AFAB individuals face significant challenges when it comes to their health and wellbeing. From seeking a diagnosis to

accessing information and support, they often experience disparities that can make their lives more difficult. A task and finish group, as part of the all-Wales planned care programme's Clinical Implementation Network for Gynaecology, with specific focus on Premenstrual Disorders can explore what works well inequalities women/AFAB individuals with PMDD are still facing. This group has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of those with PMDD and PME in Wales.



FTWW: Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales

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10/04/2024

Dear Jack Sargeant MS, Chair of Senedd Petitions Committee

We are delighted to lend our support to Becci Smart's recent petition, '**Health Education & Improvement Wales to make PMDD a mandatory CPD module in postgrad medical teaching**' and to supply further information for you and the Committee to consider as part of your deliberations.

FTWW: Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales is a pan-Wales patient-led charity and disabled people's organisation, dedicated to achieving health equity for women and people registered female at birth. We support and advocate for those who are disabled and / or living with long-term health issues, of which PMDD (Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder) is one. FTWW also Chairs the third sector Women's Health Wales Coalition, whose evidence has led to the Health Minister's commitment to a 10-year Women's Health Plan. That evidence included several recommendations to improve care for patients living with PMDD, and we look forward to their being fulfilled in good time.

Becci is a long-standing member of FTWW and one of our volunteer Champions for PMDD. As such, we are pleased to be working with her and Health Education & Improvement Wales (HEIW) to deliver a training webinar on PMDD this month, PMDD Awareness Month, which will be shared with general practitioners and other healthcare



professionals in the coming weeks. We believe this goes some way to ensuring the petition's key aim is met. However, we would also like to apprise you of three additional / follow-up recommendations which would make a huge and positive difference to the experiences and lives of those living with PMDD in Wales in the hope that the Committee will be able to facilitate further work in these areas – thank you in advance for your attention to these, as follows:

- Each health board website to contain information about PMDD, with signposting to both the International Association of Premenstrual Disorders (IAPMD) and FTWW. This should include the key question, 'What does PMS look like for you?' and explain the differences between PMS (premenstrual syndrome) and PMDD. It must be available in both English and Welsh.
- A specific page on the NHS 111 website to be dedicated to PMDD, with information on PMDD-specific treatments, when to see your GP, details on symptom tracking alongside the menstrual cycle, and links to peer-support groups (POD Wales Peer Support and FTWW.) It must be available in both English and Welsh.
- A task and finish group to be set up (potentially as part of the all-Wales planned care programme's Clinical Implementation Network for Gynaecology), including clinicians and patient advocates, to look at existing barriers to optimum care for PMDD and PME (premenstrual exacerbation) and take forward measures to address them. It is vitally important that intersectional inequities in care are considered, including geographical variation across Wales, so that all patients, regardless of postcode, can expect to receive the same high standard of care going forward.

We would like to reiterate our thanks to you and the Committee for considering the above, and for playing a key role in improving the lives of those experiencing PMDD and PME symptoms across Wales.

We very much look forward to hearing the outcome of the Committee's deliberations on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Kind regards

Debbie Shaffer, Director of Policy & Research  
FTWW: Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales

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## P-06-1400 Fair and adequate resourcing of general practice in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/7850

Petition Number: P-06-1400

Petition title: Fair and adequate resourcing of general practice in Wales

### Text of petition:

General Practice in Wales is under significant and growing strain. GP numbers are declining, demand is rising, and practices are struggling to recruit and retain staff.

General practice is being forced to try and cope with inadequate resources, an unsustainable workload, and a workforce under pressure across the whole of Wales, with some areas in crisis.

Current inadequate capacity is a product of longstanding workload, workforce, and well-being issues, which correlate to the chronic underfunding of general medical services.

BMA Cymru Wales's Save Our Surgeries campaign asks Welsh Government to commit to a rescue package for General Practice, to provide GPs and their patients with the support they need.

By taking one minute to sign this petition, you can amplify our calls for the Welsh Government to provide a rescue package for General Practice.



# 1. Background

BMA Cymru Wales' [Save Our Surgeries campaign](#), highlights that, in the last ten years:

- the number of patients registered at GP practices in Wales has increased by 93,317 (2.9%);
- the number of practices has decreased from 470 to 386 (18%);
- the number of full time equivalent (FTE) GPs has decreased by 456 (21.7%) from 1901 to 1445;
- there has been an increase in the average practice list size from 6780 to 8378 patients (23.5%);
- the number of patients per FTE GP has risen from 1675 to 2210, an increase of 32%.

It calls for urgent action to commit to: **funding** general practice properly; invest in the **general practice workforce**; produce a **workforce strategy**, and; address **staff wellbeing**.

## 2. Welsh Government action

General practice is a core element of primary care - those services which provide the first point of contact in the NHS. A [strategic workforce plan for primary care](#) has been developed by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and the [Strategic Programme for Primary Care \(SPPC\)](#), in collaboration with stakeholders. This is expected to be launched in Spring 2024.

A key action in HEIW's 10 year [workforce strategy for health and social care](#) (October 2020) is to introduce a Health and Wellbeing Framework across the health and social care workforce setting clear and measurable standards to help drive improvement.

Most GPs in Wales are independent contractors, commissioned by the relevant Health Board to provide care under the General Medical Services (GMS) contract. In a February 2024 **written statement**, the Minister for Health and Social Services confirmed that negotiations for the 2023-24 General Medical Services (GMS) contract had been concluded. She said:

I have heard the strength of feeling from GPs about the future of general practice, through the Save Our Surgeries campaign and reinforced by the Senedd petition. [...] I welcome the pragmatic conclusion which will see £20m invested into GMS at a time of significant financial constraint, while recognising that the outcome this year does not fully resolve ongoing sustainability issues in general practice. We will continue to work together to take forward shared priorities over the coming year.

In her response to the petition (letter dated 11 March 2024), the Minister also highlighted action taken through the [Primary Care Model for Wales](#), to reduce demand on GPs. This includes the introduction of the NHS 111 Wales service, and investment in community care and general practice staff:

We have invested £12 million over three years to enable practices to build their capacity through additional staff and we are seeing an increase in the number of nurses and direct patient care staff employed in general practices, supporting patient access to care. The new Unified GMS Contract also will help to reduce bureaucracy and free up more time for GPs to see patients.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Health and Social Care Committee hasn't carried out any specific inquiries on general practice (or primary care more broadly) in the Sixth Senedd, although relevant issues have been raised for example in [budget scrutiny](#), the Committee's current inquiry into [supporting people with chronic conditions](#), and ongoing work on the [health and social care workforce](#) ( 'workforce' was identified by the Committee as one of its [priority issues](#) for this Senedd term).

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-06-1400  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00166/24

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

11 March 2024

Dear Jack,

### **Petition P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales**

Thank you for your letter of 18 January regarding the above petition.

I am grateful for the continued efforts of everyone working in general practice to maintain high-quality care in face of sustained high demand for their services. We know over 1.5 million people consistently access GP practice services across Wales each month.

On 7 February, I was pleased to announce that the General Medical Services (GMS) contract negotiations for 2023-24 have concluded and that despite the financial challenges and budget constraints, this conclusion to negotiations will see £20 million investment into general practice in Wales, the highest level of investment in many years. This pragmatic outcome will provide some certainty to practices and crucially, this investment will include an uplift of 5% to pay for all staff working in the practice – including GPs, practice nurses and administrative staff.

I am aware that the above Senedd Petition has collected a number of signatures, signalling the strength of feeling in relation to the sustainability of General Medical Services and the resourcing of general practice in Wales.

The BMA Cymru Save our Surgeries Campaign, which the petition notes, highlights that there are longstanding workforce and capacity issues that need to be addressed to ensure general practice is sustainable for the future. These issues will not be addressed through a one-year contract and pay agreement alone. We are committed to continuing to work with key stakeholders, including the BMA and GPC Wales, to develop strategic solutions.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[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.

While a debate on these matters will surface several considerations around levels of funding in general practice and primary care and community care more broadly, this must be cognisant of current financial constraints. Unprecedented pressures on budgets this year have necessitated difficult decisions across all Welsh Government departments and within the health and care budget. The [draft budget for 2024-25](#) highlighted that the funding settlement for the forthcoming year is not sufficient to respond to the extraordinary pressures that Wales faces. In light of ongoing funding constraints, we need an open conversation on how we can maximise the effectiveness and integration of primary care services to achieve better outcomes for people in Wales.

Through our Primary Care Model for Wales, we have already taken steps to reduce demand on GPs. This includes the introduction of the NHS 111 Wales service and increasing the range of services community pharmacists can provide. Our investments in community care, for example, £5m to increase the allied health professional workforce and £8.24m to increase the community nursing workforce, will increase the support available to GPs via community resource teams.

We have invested £12 million over three years to enable practices to build their capacity through additional staff and we are seeing an increase in the number of nurses and direct patient care staff employed in general practices, supporting patient access to care. The new Unified GMS Contract also will help to reduce bureaucracy and free up more time for GPs to see patients.

Our strong social partnership approach in Wales underpins our ongoing engagement with BMA Cymru Wales. We look forward to working with the GP profession to progress solutions to workforce and sustainability issues to safeguard general practice for the future.

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

# Comments on Ministerial response to Petition P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales

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## Introduction

BMA Cymru Wales is grateful to the Senedd Petitions Committee for considering the petition and the surrounding issues at its next meeting on Monday 22 April 2024.

We are pleased to provide **comment on the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care correspondence dated 11 March 2024 to the Chair of the Senedd Cymru Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales.**

The BMA is a professional association and trade union representing and negotiating on behalf of all doctors and medical students in the UK. It is a leading voice advocating for outstanding health care and a healthy population. It is an association providing members with excellent individual services and support throughout their lives.

## Comments

We are pleased that our petition is now due to be considered by the Petitions Committee on 22 April. The petition garnered 21,620 public signatures<sup>i</sup>, signalling strong sentiment of citizens in Wales to see General Practice resourced properly to meet their increasing needs. The Health Secretary's overall acknowledgement of the core issues in her letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee is encouraging but the problems in accessing GP services are all too real for patients and citizens.

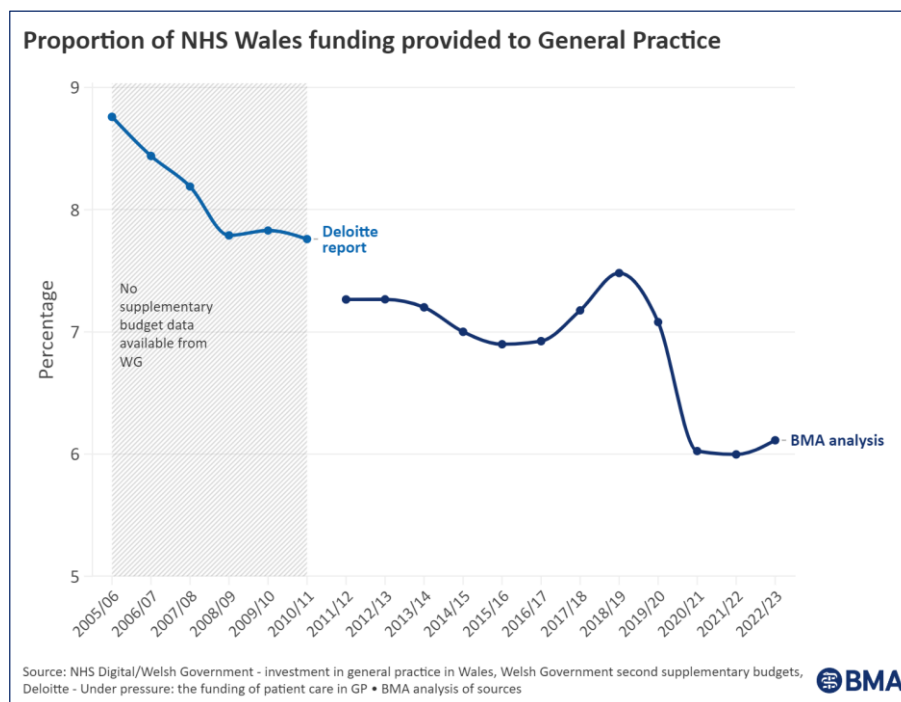
We urge the Petitions Committee to recommend this petition for debate, and also a full inquiry by the Health and Social Care Committee. This would allow for further evidence on the needs and potential societal benefit of increasing direct investment into General Medical Services (GMS) as a proportion of the NHS Wales budget.

The chronic underfunding of GMS has led to many critical issues, with lack of capacity directly impacting the quality and timeliness of healthcare services. It is beyond question the root cause of access issues experienced by many patients across Wales.

Our analysis<sup>ii</sup> suggests that as of 2022/23, 6.1% of the NHS Wales budget is invested into GMS whereas this was once 8.7% in 2005/06:







Redressing the level of funding for GMS via incremental rises in the proportion of spend would:

- in the short term, secure the future for general practice from its current precipitous state.
- in the medium term, allow GMS to enhance its natural role in prevention and to improve citizen well-being, in line with the aspirations of 'A Healthier Wales'<sup>iii</sup>. This relatively small prioritisation of investment would disproportionately reduce the burden on wider NHS and care services.

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

While the letter states that the Welsh Government “looks forward to working with the GP profession to progress solutions to workforce and sustainability issues”, we feel that this response falls short of offering tangible constructive solutions to the issues and suggested approaches set out within the *Save our Surgeries*<sup>iv</sup> report and ongoing dialogue between ourselves and the Welsh Government. A ‘More of the same’ approach is likely to jeopardise the future of GMS in Wales.

### Contract negotiations and Pay Uplifts

The 2023/24 contract negotiations, conducted on a tripartite basis between the BMA’s Welsh General Practitioners Committee (GPC Wales), NHS Wales representatives and Welsh Government, concluded without a negotiated contract agreement. Subsequently a sum of £20m, which the Health Minister maintained as the maximum available financial offer, was invested into the GMS contract for 23/24. This investment included a minimum 5% pay uplift for all staff working in General Practice and was backdated to April 2023.

To put the financial offer into perspective, this quantum represented 4.4% of the ‘core’ GMS Contract value of £450 million, at a point in time when CPI was running at 8.7%.

GPC Wales was clear that the value of this investment was sub-inflationary, inadequate in terms of unavoidable expense pressures, and contained a pay award which did not meet the recommendations of the independent Doctors and Dentist Review Body.

As the uplift barely covered increased expenses (the mandated staff pay award plus mounting running costs) GP contractors will receive a real terms pay cut, exacerbating retention problems.<sup>v</sup>

## Reprioritising funding for General Practice within the Primary Care system

We acknowledge the Welsh Government's current Primary Care Model for Wales. In our opinion it is yet to be proven that this alleviates pressures on GPs or provides adequate care for patients.

The Minister's response highlights alternative primary care services, such as Urgent Primary care centres (UPCCs), the 111 services and the Common Ailments scheme. Whilst every little helps, these schemes are a drop in the ocean compared to the ever-increasing demand for GP services and come at a disproportionately higher cost per appointment in our estimation.

- Between April 2022 - March 2023, Welsh GMS practices provided just short of 20m contacts.
- In the same time frame, UPCCs offered 35,000 appointments (0.18% of the GMS total)
- UPCC coverage is not universal, with only 80% of the population having access.
- We would question the value for money of the investment, as recent estimates from Cardiff & Vale UHB show that each UPCC appointment costs **£32.38**, approximately 50% more than a GMS appointment.
- The capacity figures provided by NHS Wales for 111 are misleading - with 111 offering 24/7 coverage for all health enquiries, not just GMS, and is not a direct alternative.

Long-term, measured and costed comparative evaluation of these new primary care initiatives against direct investment in General Practice is needed to deduce overall return on investment and reach a truly sustainable solution to the provision of GMS in the future. GMS practices have always been innovators in using skill mix to deliver the right professional and maximum value for money. Directing the equivalent investment into General Practice could provide greater practice level continuity of unfiltered holistic care to the entire population of Wales.

## Additional points for consideration

### Workforce and sustainability

According to our analysis of Welsh Government's GP workforce data<sup>vi</sup>, one in five practices has handed their contract back since 2013, totalling 92 practices. We expect this trend to continue based on current sustainability concerns.

Meanwhile, although GP headcount appears to have remained stable in reality the number of Full Time Equivalent GPs has reduced by 25% in that period. This means that for those remaining, the number of patients per full-time GP increased by 36% from 1,676 to 2,283.

### Workload

The workload in General Practice is exceptionally high. Thanks to the Activity Data Quality Improvement Project, developed in part by GPC Wales, we now have national-level activity and escalation data, which means practices should consistently categorise their activity and document the pressure on their services. This data allows us to evidence the scale of pressure upon GPs at a national level. For a population of around 3.2m people, during the year 2022/23, there were:

- 27 million telephone contacts to surgeries
- 19 million appointments offered.
- 56 million items issued on prescription.
- January 2024 saw 1.68m appointments delivered alone.

Escalation status data has been often quoted by the First Minister in response to MS questions at Senedd plenary. Practices record the pressures upon them via the Primary Care Information Portal.

This data is available to Health Board executives meaning that the immense pressures on practices are now directly visible to commissioners of GMS services.

### Do you have further questions in response?

Despite the rhetoric and stated aims of A Healthier Wales calling for a “*shift in resources to the community*” to redress the health system’s reliance on traditional hospital services, our analysis shows that the proportion of the NHS budget provided to general practice is extremely low in comparison to the wider health service spend, at 6.1% for 2022/23. This will have been further exacerbated by the bailout of Health Board deficits<sup>vii</sup> during the 23/24 financial year. The value of the bailout amounts to approximately 107% of the total GMS core contract value at 22/23.

- Does WG consider that the aims of ‘A Healthier Wales’ and the needs of the Welsh public in accessing GPs are being met with these funding decisions?

With the recent announcement that our BMA colleagues in secondary care have paused their industrial action relating to their pay disputes to allow further negotiations, we ask that the requirements and needs of General Medical Services are similarly considered in what must be a ‘*fair and proportionate*’ prioritisation of NHS Wales resources.

- Does WG and the NHS in Wales have a coherent overall view for funding all sectors in a sustainable way?

### 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?

The contract negotiations for GMS in Wales for the 2024/2025 year are due to begin in the coming weeks, with the exchange of mandates for negotiations due by 19<sup>th</sup> April. With this in mind, GPC Wales has written to the First Minister, urging him to consider the issues raised within this document regarding General Practice sustainability and the importance of Resource Restoration.

It is important to note that GPC Wales is not calling for pay restoration as our directly employed colleagues are rightly doing but asking for a fair and proportionate consequential of overall NHS funding to be directed to GMS to avoid the systematic defunding we have seen since 2008.

Moving into a new financial year and new budgetary cycle, it is of great public interest that this debate be heard in the Siambr so that Members from across the Senedd can discuss and represent the views of their constituents. Time is running out for NHS General Practice in Wales.

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<sup>i</sup> Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/245944>

<sup>ii</sup> Based on Welsh Government Second Supplementary Budgets, Welsh Government and NHS Digital *Investment in General Practice* statistical returns

<sup>iii</sup> [Welsh Government: A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care](#)

<sup>iv</sup> BMA Cymru Wales: *Save Our Surgeries* [www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/wales-save-our-surgeries-campaign](http://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/wales-save-our-surgeries-campaign)

<sup>v</sup> BMA Cymru Wales *GP Contract in Wales: Mythbuster* (October 2023) [bma-gp-contract-in-wales-mythbuster.pdf](http://bma-gp-contract-in-wales-mythbuster.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> *GP workforce as at 30 September 2023* [www.gov.wales/general-practice-workforce-30-september-2023-html](http://www.gov.wales/general-practice-workforce-30-september-2023-html)

<sup>vii</sup> *Written Statement: LHB Allocations and Target Control Totals* (08 November 2023) [www.gov.wales/written-statement-lhb-allocations-and-target-control-totals](http://www.gov.wales/written-statement-lhb-allocations-and-target-control-totals)

## Mental health unit with beds for men in north Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/8142-1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1405

**Petition title:** We want and need a Mental Health unit for men in north Wales with beds.

**Text of petition:** There are so many men suffering with mental health issues. It was bad enough before lockdown but now it's devastating. As a landlady, I can see for myself the many men struggling with many issues. They are crying out for help and told to speak up and ask for help, yet when they do it is non-existent.



# 1. Background

The type and severity of mental health problems people experience can be varied and therefore a range of support and treatments are available. **GPs** are often the first point of contact with mental health services and for some people, the support given by a GP is enough to manage their mental health.

GPs can refer individuals to **Local Primary Mental Health Support Services** (LPMHSS) that offer support such as counselling, psychological interventions, stress and anxiety management, voluntary groups and signposting to other sources of support. For those who require more help than a LPMHSS can provide, they can be referred to **Community Mental Health Teams** that provide more specialist help.

Some people have severe and complex mental health problems which require more specialised care and support and may be referred on to **secondary care**, which could include hospital inpatient services.

Further information on mental health services in Wales is available on the NHS 111 Wales website.

## Mental health support in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (UHB) has a Mental Health Hub available on its website which provides information on mental health support resources and how to access them. These include hubs that can be accessed on a drop in basis; free online mental health therapy; talking therapies; the C.A.L.L. Mental Health Helpline for Wales, and a range of online self-help resources.

**Urgent mental health support** 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is available to people of all ages by phoning 111 and selecting option 2. Information on support in a mental health crisis is available on the Health Board's website.

There are a number of Community Mental Health Teams across the Betsi Cadwaladr UHB area and **inpatient facilities** are also available, with proposals for a new inpatient mental health unit at Glan Clwyd Hospital currently progressing.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government is publishing a new **draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024- 2034)**, that is open for public consultation until 11 June 2024, along with a new **draft Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy**. People are encouraged to respond to the consultations as they will further inform the Welsh Government's future priorities.

In the letter to the Committee (dated 19 March 2024), the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing says the Welsh Government recognises there are some specific groups in society who are less likely to reach out for healthcare support, which includes men. The Deputy Minister states that men continue to be a priority group in the Welsh Government's Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy and also gives an example of an initiative to support men's mental health.

The Welsh Government's vision for mental health in Wales and details of the aims and focus of the draft strategies are set out in the Deputy Minister's letter. The strategies recognise that people's needs are diverse and not everyone will need access to clinical or specialist mental health services. The Welsh Government's aim is to build on the success of easy to access support such as 111 press 2 and online cognitive behavioural therapy, alongside broader approaches to continue to improve support in schools, workplaces and the community.

The Deputy Minister highlights that 41 per cent of callers to 111 press 2 are male, "which demonstrates that the service is successful in providing a model of support that is accessible for men".

In relation to establishing a mental health unit for men, the letter from the Deputy Minister notes:

Any future consideration in relation to establishing a mental health unit for men in North Wales would need to align with existing work already underway to review current service provision. The draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been informed by the work the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee has undertaken to develop future specialist mental health capacity. During the last 18-24 months, we have also reviewed a range of information from Wales, across the UK and wider to inform the strategies. All of the modelling suggests an

increase in mental health needs if we do not continue to invest in prevention, earlier intervention and whole system working.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The [Health and Social Care Committee](#) held an inquiry into mental health inequalities and published its report, [Connecting the dots: tackling mental health inequalities in Wales](#), in December 2022.

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 LN/00067/24  
Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

19 March 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 9 February regarding Petition P-06-1405 *We want and need a Mental Health unit for men in North Wales with beds.*

The Welsh Government recognises that whilst our intention is to provide safe and appropriate healthcare for everyone in Wales, there are some specific groups in society who are less likely to reach out for support and this includes men. We continue to raise awareness of the easy to access support that is available. This includes our CALL helpline, which can offer confidential emotional support and signposting to local support, and 111 press 2 for urgent mental health support. Forty-one percent of callers to 111 press 2 are male, which demonstrates that the service is successful in providing a model of support that is accessible for men.

Men continue to be a priority group in our Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy which, along with the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy were issued for consultation on 20 February. The draft Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy specifically highlights that men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women, with middle-aged men (40-49) having the highest rates of suicide of any group since 2008.<sup>1</sup>

The draft strategies, out for consultation until 11 June, aim to change how we think about mental health, empower people to improve their mental health and remove the barriers and stigma around getting help. With half of mental health conditions impacting people by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 23, there is a strong focus on prevention through ensuring everyone has equal access to the things they need to maintain good mental health, like exercise, the natural environment and belonging to the community.

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<sup>1</sup> [Suicides in England and Wales Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics](#)



There is also a specific focus on the wider factors affecting mental health, suicide and self-harm– including housing, employment and finances – with both strategies recognising that work is needed across the whole of Government and across sectors to improve mental health and wellbeing and to reduce suicide and self-harm in Wales. Some groups are at greater risk of poor mental health than others and inequalities can contribute to poor mental health. This is why the strategies will also promote equity of access, experience and outcome for all.

Our Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy aims for people in Wales to live in communities which are free from the fear and stigma associated with suicide and self-harm and are empowered and supported to both seek and offer help when it is needed.

When people do need help, the strategies recognise that people's needs are diverse and not everyone will need access to clinical or specialist mental health services. The aim is to build on the success of easy to access support like 111 press 2 and online cognitive behavioural therapy, alongside broader approaches to continue to improve support in schools, workplaces and the community. There are lots of excellent initiatives already underway across Wales to support men's mental health. Our National Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Team organised free one day events in north and south Wales for men who are members of groups, group leaders or men who are interested in establishing groups. These were grassroot events developed by men for men to explore men's needs, identify barriers, enhance collaboration and share best practices, ultimately, to inform future planning and amplify collective impact.

Our vision is that there will be a connected system of support across health, social care, third sector and wider, where people can access the right service, at the right time, and in the right place. Care and support will be person-centred, compassionate and recovery-focused, with an emphasis on improving quality, safety and access – and will be delivered by a workforce that feels supported and has the capacity, competence and confidence to meet people's needs.

The strategies also recognise the unprecedented financial pressures that we are facing and aim to provide direction to services and partners to ensure value-based targeting of resources, rather than set out a list of new funding commitments.

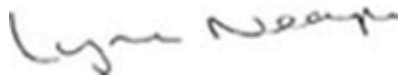
Any future consideration in relation to establishing a mental health unit for men in North Wales would need to align with existing work already underway to review current service provision. The draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been informed by the work the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee has undertaken to develop future specialist mental health capacity. During the last 18-24 months, we have also reviewed a range of information from Wales, across the UK and wider to inform the strategies. All of the modelling suggests an increase in mental health needs if we do not continue to invest in prevention, earlier intervention and whole system working.

The current consultations will further inform our future priorities and we encourage people to respond so they have a voice in shaping these priorities. We have provided the links to these consultations below for ease of reference:

[Draft suicide and self-harm prevention strategy | GOV.WALES](#)

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynne Neagle". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

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

**P-06-1405 We want and need a Mental Health unit for men in North Wales with beds – Correspondence from the petitioner to Committee, 16.04.24**

Thank you for your invitation to put my case forward.

Firstly you say you have a strategy in place for Men's Mental Health that is untrue the waiting list to receive any sort of help is ridiculous so much so that the rise in Male suicides is heartbreaking due to this major failure in your system.

Secondly the next stage is when they have actually attempted suicide. The one case I have focused on is [REDACTED] he tried & tried to get some form of help to help his mental state to no avail so out of desperation he attempted suicide thank god on this occasion he failed Sadly not the next one. He was desperate for help his [REDACTED] Hospital to try & get him some help he sat with him in the waiting room for 9 hrs to be then called in to a room to be told there was no Pyschiatric Doctors available & could he come back tomorrow. This he did in a coffin he took his own life on returning home. I personally am disgusted by his treatment that day & someone should be made accountable.

I had a meeting with his family & Hannah Blythin asking for help in changing the way mental health is dealt with in a hospital environment. Firstly there should be a separate waiting room for mental health patients as the state of mind they are already in they do not need to see what is going on in the Chaotic surrounding of A&E.

There should also be a Phyciatric team available 24/7 in the A&E dept.

Ideally I would like a residential mental Health unit in Flintshire as Wrexham is the closest one & there are never any available beds.

There has been 2 more suicides locally since [REDACTED] so something has to be done now.

Thank you

Lynda Leigh

## 20mph petitions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebrill 2024

Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/8142-3

This briefing has been prepared to support the Committee's consideration of two petitions relating to 20mph default speed limits – one in support of the policy and one calling for it to be rescinded.

### Petition 1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1407

**Petition title:** We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law.

**Text of petition:** The new 20mph law is coming into force on the 17th September and it will mark the end of having socialism in power in Wales.

Welsh Government claim to have supporting evidence stating that reducing to 20mph EVERYWHERE saves lives! Yet we get flyers merely claiming that it will, and opinions from doctors that see RTCs coming into A&E. This is NOT evidence. The only true evidence is from Belfast and it states it makes NO DIFFERENCE to RTCs!

At least one of the trial villages in Monmouthshire actually reverted their trial because it was causing absolute carnage on the roads! Mark Drakeford has come out claiming it is a success in St Brides Major but every time I go though there NO ONE is driving at 20mph.



The Welsh Government has FAILED to produce ANY convincing evidence to support these claims of safety. This law is being spearheaded by the WG Climate Change department and NOT Health & Safety!!

YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED TO US.

The Welsh Government was put there BY THE PEOPLE OF WALES, We are your boss! We demand that this foolish idea be stopped.

## Petition 2

**Petition Number:** P-06-1412

**Petition title:** We want the Welsh Government to keep the excellent 20mph law.

**Text of petition:** I agree with the new 20mph speed limit in towns and cities across Wales. It will make our streets a lot safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

# 1. Background

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. In July 2020, the Welsh Government **accepted the group's recommendations**, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following **public consultation** and a **pilot scheme across eight communities**, the Welsh Government laid the **Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order** in June 2022. The draft Order was **passed by the Senedd** in July 2022 and came into force in September 2023.

The policy has received widespread media coverage and the petition calling for the legislation to be 'rescinded' has received over 469,000 signatures – the highest ever received for a Senedd petition.

Senedd Research has previously published a number of articles on:

- the policy and reaction to it in the lead up to national roll-out;
- the implementation of the policy and the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits; and
- how the policy will be enforced and monitored.

## Impact of 20mph speed limits elsewhere

Historically, evidence on the efficacy of 20mph speed limits has been mixed. A 2018 UK Government report on the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits found “insufficient evidence” that 20mph limits in residential areas made a “significant change” in collisions and accidents.

In contrast, a 2018 review of evidence commissioned by the Welsh Government found “moderate to strong” evidence that 20mph limits reduce casualties. The review also considered evidence on other factors including active travel and air pollution.

Part of the challenge in assessing the impact arises from differing approaches to implementing 20mph. Speed limited areas vary in size, and there’s a distinction between self-enforcing 20mph limits without traffic calming measures, and traffic calmed 20mph zones.

The example of Belfast, referenced by the petitioner calling for the legislation to be rescinded, illustrates this point.

Belfast saw 76 city centre streets move to 20mph in 2016. A three year follow up review of the Belfast scheme, published in 2022, found “little effect for reduction in road traffic collisions, casualties and speed when a 20 mph speed limit intervention is implemented in a city centre”.

However, rather than finding 20mph limits ineffective, the reviewers found:

The intervention was implemented at the city centre scale (only 76 streets) in comparison to the recent city-wide intervention in Edinburgh which showed significant reductions in road traffic speed, collisions and casualties. Large scale implementation of 20 mph speed limit interventions may be an important factor for effectiveness (scale).

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A [2021 evaluation](#) of Edinburgh’s city-wide scheme concluded it “was associated with meaningful reductions in traffic speeds”. A [three year post implementation review](#) reported a 30% decrease in collisions and a 31% decrease in casualties.

Transport for London has [found similar results](#) for its wide-area scheme, with collisions falling 25% over two years to June 2022, and those resulting in death or serious injury down 24%.

## Monitoring and review in Wales

### Impact in pilot areas

As outlined, [pilots took place](#) in eight communities across Wales to trial 20mph default limits in the lead up to the national roll-out in September 2023.

The [first monitoring report](#) on the impact in pilot areas was published in March 2023, followed by a [final monitoring report](#) (for the pilot areas) in February 2024. Data up to May 2023 showed:

- “large positive” changes in relation to speed reduction Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and attitudes to active travel;
- a “slight positive” change in vehicle / pedestrian yield behaviour; and
- “no discernible change” in local air quality and “slight negative” changes in vehicle journey times, including a general decrease in punctuality for peak time bus services.

### Monitoring the national roll-out

In September 2023 Transport for Wales (TfW) published a [monitoring framework document](#) for the national roll-out. This identifies the policy objectives and the indicators to be used. Data will be collected for up to five years post-implementation.

In terms of reporting timescales [the framework says](#) TfW will publish an interim report in June 2024 based on data collected during the first 6 months following the national roll-out. A further report on the first full year of implementation is expected in December 2024. Formal reporting will then take place annually.

## Early speed monitoring data

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In February 2024 TfW published [preliminary data on average speed changes](#) following the national roll-out. The data were collected on main through roads at 43 locations in nine settlements.

The data shows that average speeds on these roads dropped an average of 4mph - from 28.9mph to 24.8mph.

## Review of exceptions guidance

While the default 20mph speed limit is now in force on restricted roads, highway authorities (local authorities for local roads and the Welsh Ministers for trunk roads/motorways) can use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to change the limit from the default of 20mph where appropriate.

In November 2022 the Welsh Government issued [guidance to highway authorities](#) on the process for setting exceptions. However the Welsh Government has suggested that local authorities across Wales have interpreted the guidance differently. It has therefore [established a review team](#) to examine how the guidance has been applied.

The review team published its [initial report](#) in February 2024 and is expected to submit its final report and draft updated guidance to the Welsh Government by summer 2024.

## 2. Welsh Government action

A response to the petition against the policy (letter to the Chair dated 18 March) has been received. However no response to the petition supporting the policy has been received in time to be reflected in this brief.

In his letter dated 18 March, the former Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, refers to the Belfast study, which the petitioner suggests is evidence that 20mph limits have little impact on road traffic collisions. The former Deputy Minister says:

The Belfast study referred to in the petition is not comparing like for like. Everything about the Welsh approach has been different to the small-scale project in Belfast...[the Belfast study] has reinforced our approach that to reap the real benefits of 20mph, the changes need to happen at



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scale and be part of a bigger cultural change to the way we travel and see our local communities.

The letter also highlights the early speed monitoring data reported by TfW (outlined earlier in this briefing) and the ongoing review of exceptions guidance.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2020 the Senedd debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits with 45 of 53 Members voting in favour of the motion.

As outlined, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order in June 2022. The draft Order was passed by the Senedd in July 2022. It has been raised in the Senedd on numerous occasions.

In October 2023 the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee scrutinised the Deputy Minister on the policy.

The Committee has previously considered a number of petitions relating to the policy including:

- A petition calling on the Welsh Government to stop the introduction of the 20mph limit (considered in April 2022). At that time the Committee agreed to close the petition due to the ability of local authorities to change the limit on roads where 20mph would not be appropriate.
- A petition calling on the Welsh Government to hold a public poll on the speed limit reduction (considered in October 2022). This petition was also closed.
- A petition calling for a survey of residents living in the pilot areas (considered in March 2024). Again this petition was closed in light of the monitoring work taking place through TfW outlined earlier.

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-06-1407  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00278/24

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

18 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February regarding Petition P-06-1407 We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law.

This is the biggest change in road safety in Wales for decades and I recognise the strength of feeling that is against the change. However, the evidence around the world is very clear - lowering speeds will reduce collisions, save lives and reduce injuries.

The [Wales 20mph Task Force Group](#) identified the outcomes which would be expected from changing the default speed limit for restricted roads in Wales to 20mph; and the practical actions needed to implement this change in the law. It found overwhelming evidence that lower speeds result in fewer collisions and a reduced severity of injuries; and consistent evidence that casualties are reduced when 20mph limits are introduced.

Included in the Taskforce Report is reference to a [review of evidence](#) on reduced casualties as an outcome of 20mph, carried out by Dr Adrian Davis, on behalf of the Welsh Government, in 2018. The [Explanatory Memorandum](#) accompanying the 20mph legislation provides further information about the evidence underpinning the change.

We have also provided an extensive frequently asked questions page on our website that includes links to evidence and covers the majority of concerns that have been raised: [Introducing 20mph speed limits: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#). Further information can be accessed here: [20mph speed limits | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

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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 Belfast study referred to in the petition is not comparing like for like.](#) Everything about the Welsh approach has been different to the small-scale project in Belfast. The report itself notes that ‘the intervention was implemented at the city centre scale (only 76 streets) in comparison to the recent city-wide intervention in Edinburgh which showed significant reductions in road traffic speed, collisions and [casualties](#)’. [It has reinforced our approach that](#) to reap the real benefits of 20mph, the changes need to happen at scale and be part of a bigger cultural change to the way we travel and see our local communities.

Last week I published a [written statement](#) which set out the early speed data that’s been recorded and the results are extremely encouraging. The [data collected by Transport for Wales](#) monitored millions of vehicles’ speeds in nine different communities across Wales before and after implementation. It shows the average speeds on main roads dropped an average of 4mph - from 28.9mph to 24.8mph – providing clear evidence that speeds are moving in the right direction. This downward trend in speeds is also supported by the phase one data in the [final monitoring report from the first phase implementation areas](#).

From the outset we have said that we wouldn’t get the speed limit on every single restricted road in Wales right first time. We have appointed a small team of experts to work with local authorities to review how the guidance on making exceptions has been applied and to suggest ways we could help highway authorities make changes. The review will examine the application of guidance given to highway authorities in setting exceptions to the default 20mph limit [Review of 20mph default speed limit exceptions: terms of reference](#).

The group has published its [interim report](#) and will now gather a wide range of views on the exceptions guidance from Highway Authorities, stakeholder groups and representative bodies. The final report and draft updated guidance will be submitted to the Welsh Government by the Summer Recess 2024.

I hope this is a helpful response. Please get in touch if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,



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

**P-06-1407 We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 08 April 2024**

Hello,

Thank you for your email. However, I am unable to agree with any of the point Mr Waters had made. He cannot call it like for like as it will never be that. Having a trial in city centres or in a built up city is ALSO not the same as in an entire country. Wales is nothing like Ireland/Scotland. However, the Belfast study did still come out saying that there was little to no impact on this:  
<https://jech.bmj.com/content/77/1/17>

If Mr Waters would like to have a better comparison, then maybe he should investigate the Spanish implementation, they claimed there was a reduction in RTC's by 24% and up but failed to make clear that this was right in the middle of their pandemic lockdown which saw some of the most curtailing restrictions in Europe. In 2022 when road journeys went back up, they saw a 4% increase in fatalities.

This does not support Welsh Labour's ideology on this. You claim that people are getting used to it but stats prove otherwise.

- Feb 2024 saw an increase of 450 going faster than the previous month.
- Your own assumption that people would have gotten used to it by now is not accurate. You MUST NOT mistake compliance for acceptance. We will never get used to it.
- Your stats come from a small number of camera checks and does not reflect a true picture of Wales as a whole. You say that its dropped to 24.8mph but you haven't said in what 9 communities. I would like that information along with the unredacted raw evidence to support this.

Wales has not gotten used to it and has not slowed down or 'have been educated' to change our thinking. Lets not forget that the Welsh Government works for us and not the other way around. We will not be dictated to by you. No one asked for this and you carried on without a care for the people of Wales. Your own polls and surveys came back against this blanket change and before you say its not a blanket change, please check the definition of default. If you change the default speed limit then you are introducing a BLANKET change. Mr Waters also used this term in his own reporting.

I cannot trust a Government that would get an employee of a charity that has received millions in funding to come out and say that 20mph works but didn't make that clear from the outset and had to admit it afterwards, so how can I trust the so called figures you are providing when you have not made public the documentation that support it?

My final remarks on this are:

Welsh Labour must not simply pay this lip service. This petition has almost half a million signatures. That is 24 thousand more than they had votes in the last Senedd election. The people of Wales have spoken and they do not want this. You do not

answer to lobby groups or charities that nag you to implement things, you answer you us and you may not like the answer we give you at the next Senedd election.

Thank you.

# P-06-1418: Legislation to protect sports pitches from dog fouling

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 22 Ebril 2024  
Petitions Committee | 22 April 2024

Reference: SR24/8458-10

Petition Number: P-06-1418

Petition title: New legislation should be introduced to protect sports pitches from dog fouling

Text of petition:

Dog poo on sports pitches creates serious health risks for players of all ages. Current legislation such as Public Spaces Protection Orders have proved insufficient to prevent this problem, meaning sports club volunteers are having to inspect and clear pitches of dog mess every time pitches are used for training or fixtures.

New legislation is required as the current legislation has proved useless because of lack of enforcement by local authorities.

The following news article highlights the serious injuries that can result from dog mess on sports pitches:

<https://nation.cymru/news/ms-urges-welsh-govt-to-ban-dogs-from-sports-fields/>

New legislation is required to protect sports players as the current law has proved to be toothless.

Where recreational grounds provide mixed use of general leisure and sports facilities, local authorities should be advised to put in place strong measures to mitigate the risk of players coming into contact with dog mess. These



measures could include greater levels of enforcement, fencing off sports pitches, not allowing dogs to be walked off leads etc.

Sports clubs should also be able to seek compensation if club volunteers are compelled to clear dog mess from pitches before they can be used.

We do not seek to make dog walking more difficult, we simply seek to protect players.

## 1. Background

It is illegal for dog owners to not clean up their dog's waste in a public area. There is an exemption for some kinds of public land in England and Wales, including: land used for agriculture or woodlands; rural common land; land that is predominantly marshland, moor or heath; and highways with a speed limit of 50mph or more.

Litter authorities have a statutory duty under section 89 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1990* (as amended) to ensure that, so far as reasonably practicable, their land is kept clear of litter (including dog waste) and refuse. 'Litter authorities' generally refers to local authorities, but also includes educational institutions and the Crown (in each case in respect of its own land) and the Secretary of State.

In England and Wales, local authorities can issue on-the-spot fines, known as Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), for dog fouling. The amount may vary by local authority, but can be up to £150. If someone refuses to pay the fine, they can be taken to court and fined up to £1,000.

Local authorities in England and Wales have powers to tackle dog fouling by issuing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) (previously called Dog Control Orders).

Local authorities can use PSPOs to stop anti-social behaviour such as dog fouling in a public place. PSPOs can make it an offence if dog owners:

- don't clean up after their dogs; and/or
- allow their dogs to enter particular places that have a PSPO, like playgrounds or parks.



FPNs can be issued if the conditions set under the PSPO are breached.

Registered blind dog owners cannot be fined.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Cabinet Secretary's letter states that dog fouling is an issue that the Welsh Government takes very seriously, and that whilst enforcement can play a role in addressing the problem, its aim has been to focus on responsible dog ownership. This has included supporting local authorities and working with Keep Wales Tidy to raise awareness through communication campaigns and education programmes.

The letter outlines that Welsh Government officials monitor the use of FPNs via the annual enforcement data survey of local authorities, and liaise with enforcement officers to help understand the action being taken across Wales. For 2022/23, 66 FPNs were issued for dog fouling offences across Wales, an increase from 25 in 2021/22.

The letter also refers to survey work with local authorities which indicated that whilst there are some operational issues associated with PSPOs, for example the requirement to review and consult on their use every three years, there were other mitigating factors in the relatively low numbers of FPNs being issued. This included budgetary constraints, loss of staff resources due to retirement or redeployment and that some local authorities no longer employed private enforcement companies. Local authority officers also noted that even with the availability of enforcement tools it can be difficult to catch irresponsible dog owners. This is because the offence usually needs to be witnessed by an enforcement officer and many incidents typically occur outside of the hours worked by enforcement officers.

The Cabinet Secretary states at present there is no plan to introduce any new legislation in this area. He said that as statutory bodies, local authorities have a legal responsibility to keep their land clear of refuse and litter (including dog waste) and "it is ultimately for them to decide on how best to deploy the various tools and resources available to them".

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue of dog fouling and sports pitches has not been considered in 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.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion  
Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref - P-06-1318  
Ein cyf/Our ref - DB/00286/24

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

5 April 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 19 March to the former Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Tourism, relating to Petition P-06-1318. *This calls upon the Welsh government to introduce new legislation to deal with dog fouling on sports pitches.* I am responding as policies relating to local environmental quality reside within my portfolio.

Dog fouling is an issue the Welsh Government takes very seriously and whilst enforcement can play a role in addressing the problem, our aim has been to encourage responsible dog ownership. This work has predominantly focussed on supporting Local Authorities (LAs) and Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) to raise awareness through communication campaigns and education programmes. For example KWT, with grant funding from the Welsh Government, undertook a yearlong campaign as part of its *Caru Cymru* programme. The '[Leave only pawprints](#)' campaign focused on using behavioural change and awareness raising to reduce dog fouling on a national scale. This included the development of a communication toolkit for LAs and other partners to use. Trials were also run in LAs to help encourage people to clean up after their dogs.

Where such preventative measures fail and irresponsible dog owners choose to ignore the law, there are several enforcement options available to LAs. These includes the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) of up to £150 to those dog owners who are caught not picking up their dog waste and the establishment of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs). The latter can be used to prohibit certain activities involving dogs in a specific area, for example preventing access to certain public spaces (including parks) or requiring dogs to be kept under control which can help prevent dog fouling in these areas. FPNs can be issued for a breach of the conditions set under the PSPO.

Officials monitor the use of FPNs via the annual enforcement data survey of LAs and liaise with enforcement officers to help understand the action being undertaken across Wales. I confirm for the 2022/23 reporting year 66 FPNs were issued for dog fouling offences, an increase from the 25 FPNs issued during 2021/22. Views collected from LAs as part of this

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[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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.

survey work indicated that whilst there are some operational issues associated with PSPOs, for example the requirement to review and consult on their use every three years, there were other mitigating factors in the relatively low numbers of FPNs being issued. This included budgetary constraints, loss of staff resources due to retirement or redeployment and that some LAs no longer employed private enforcement companies. LA officers have also noted that even with the availability of enforcement tools it can be difficult to catch irresponsible dog owners, as the offence usually needs to be witnessed by an enforcement officer and many incidents typically occur outside of the hours worked by enforcement officers.

The Welsh Government continues to monitor and review the use of existing enforcement tools, however at present there is no plan to introduce any new legislation. It should also be noted that as statutory bodies LAs have a legal responsibility for keeping their land and highways clear of litter and refuse (which includes dog waste) and it is ultimately for them to decide on how best to deploy the various tools and resources available to them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

**Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig**

**Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs**

# Agenda Item 3.1

## **P-06-1209 Create a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales**

This petition was submitted by Mike O'Brien, having collected a total of 77 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The Welsh government have said for a long time now that identifying unpaid carers is a difficult task, so this petition is to ask for the creation of a national carers register to make identifying unpaid carers easier.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1209  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00791/23

Jack Sargeant MS  
Member of the Senedd for Alyn & Deeside  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
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Jack.Sargeant@senedd.wales

03 January 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2023 in relation to petition P-06-1209 on the creation of a national list of all unpaid carers in Wales. This response is further to my correspondence on this subject on 8 October 2021, 10 January 2023, 7 September 2023 and 1 November 2023.

I have previously outlined my commitment to promote self-identification by unpaid carers and recognition of carers by professionals: most significantly health, education and social care practitioners. This remains the first priority of our national unpaid carers strategy and we continue to fund and work closely with the national carers organisations to improve professional recognition and the recording of information on unpaid carers. There is ongoing work by Welsh Government officials to improve the data on unpaid carers reported by local authorities. A framework for consistent and comprehensive local authority data reporting on unpaid carers is in development.

The feasibility of a national carers register has been looked into thoroughly. I have concluded that, as it was envisioned, it would not be of significant value or benefit to unpaid carers, or other stakeholders. This view has been supported by Carers Wales and Carers Trust Wales and by the Ministerial Advisory Board for Unpaid Carers, following its last meeting on 25 September 2023.

One of the issues arising from the exploratory work into a register has been that, due to GDPR restrictions, Welsh Government cannot access details of individual unpaid carers held by local authorities, health boards and other organisations to create a national list. Individuals would need to sign up to a Welsh Government list, in addition to the other lists mentioned. Other list holders would need to continue with their own lists for their own purposes.

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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.

This would create uncertainty around accuracy and representativeness of any collated data used from such a list. Some people who do not readily identify themselves as unpaid carers are unlikely to subscribe to an additional list, are harder to reach due to not being online or may not wish to share their details in any event. Where people's circumstances and personal data changes, they would need to proactively update their personal information. Due to the difficulties associated with this, a register generated in this way could not be used to collect accurate data on the numbers of unpaid carers in Wales and their circumstances.

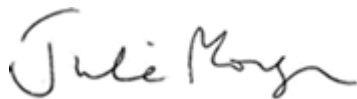
While I have outlined this in previous correspondence, the purpose of repeating is to respond to the request for clarification in your last letter about the 'verification of unpaid carer status'.

If existing or newly developed 'carers' card' schemes were to be considered as potential sources of data on unpaid carers, in addition to their primary purpose, the currency and reliability of any data drawn would need to be very carefully considered. I do not view this as a matter of trust, but more about the difficulties in reaching the levels of confidence in data sufficient for use by Welsh Government in its official statistics.

My officials have been in touch with the petitioner and have indicated they are interested to follow the progress of the digital version of the Carers UK card in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

My officials have arranged a face-to-face meeting with the petitioner in January to discuss any potential misunderstandings with regard to Welsh Government support for unpaid carers.

Yours sincerely,

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

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

# Agenda Item 3.2

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

This petition was submitted by Lawson Webb, having collected a total of 1,214 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

There are 1,000s of people suffering from long covid who are not getting any medical help. We feel ignored and helpless. Our lives have been decimated.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central



**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-06-1217  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00304/24

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

11 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your further letter of 5 February on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding services for people with Long COVID.

I was sorry to read that a meeting has not yet been arranged between the petitioner and my officials. I note that there is now a new lead petitioner, Ms Georgia Walby, and shall be asking my officials to contact her as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

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

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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.

**P-06-1217 Open Long Covid one stop medical hubs & clinics - Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 17 April 2024.**

Dear Petitions Committee

Thank you for your email.

I can confirm that I have met with the officials mentioned by the Heath Minister. It seemed to be a productive meeting, and useful action points were promised. There has been no follow up as yet as the person leading the meeting told me she would be on leave for most of April and would get back to me on her return.

The only other comment I would like to add is that it has been disappointing that the Heath Minister herself has again declined to meet with us - it gives the impression that hearing about the lived experience of people with long covid is not a priority.

Thanks for all of your help in this matter,

# Agenda Item 3.3

**P-06-1247 We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales**

This petition was submitted by Mark Hooper, having collected a total of 1,619 signatures.

## **Text of Petition:**

Moving to a four-day working week boosts productivity & workers' wellbeing.

After successful trials of a shorter working week in Iceland - with no reduction in pay - governments in Scotland, Ireland & Spain are all devising their own four-day week pilots that are scheduled to begin next year.

There's also serious moves towards a four-day week taking place in Belgium, New Zealand, Germany & Japan.

We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales.

## **Additional Information:**

When Microsoft trialled a four-day week with no loss of pay in their Japan office, productivity went up by 40%.

(<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/nov/04/microsoft-japan-four-day-work-week-productivity>)

According to the Health & Safety Executive, 55% of all sick days taken last year were a direct result of work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

Moving to a four-day week would dramatically reduce mental health issues in Wales.

A study by the environmental organisation Platform London found that the introduction of a four-day week with no loss of pay would shrink the UK's carbon emissions by 127m tonnes, a reduction of more than 20%.

(<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/27/four-day-working-week-would-slash-uk-carbon-footprint-report>)

Four-day week 'an overwhelming success' in Iceland

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-57724779>.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan

- South Wales Central

# Agenda Item 3.4

## **P-06-1299 Welsh Government 'Freeze on road building" to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life**

This petition was submitted by Susan Blaney, having collected a total of 455 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The recent fire at Tylorstown Working Mens' Club proved that the infrastructure in the Rhondda Fach needs urgent updating. With the main road blocked for several days, all traffic was diverted through side streets causing blockages and congestion. Schools had to be shut, public transport halted, school transport cancelled, people were unable to get to work and there was no accessible route for emergency vehicles.

### **Additional Information:**

The relief road from Tylorstown to Maerdy has been in the Local Authority's Local Development Plan for years, it's time the people of the Fach see some swift action. This can't happen with the Welsh Government's "freeze" on new roads as stands.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

Jack Sargeant MS  
Pensions Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN  
[Returned via email to petitions@senedd.wales]

14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

**Re: Petition P- 06-1299 Welsh Government Freeze on road building to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life (Rhondda Fach Relief Road)**

I refer to your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and apologise for the late response on this matter.

I would confirm that the Porth Relief Road which was a single carriageway from Porth to Pontygwaith was successfully constructed between 2004-2007 and was fully funded via the Welsh Assembly Government's Transport Grant Fund.

The Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road which is the continuation of the Porth Relief Road is from Pontygwaith to Maerdy and is identified in the RCT Local Development Plan up to 2021 (adopted March 2011) under policy no NSA 20(2), the route is currently safeguarded for this scheme. I would respectfully bring your attention to the fact that the Local Development Plan is under review and subject to statutory and public consultation and is being led by RCT's Planning Service Area. Furthermore, the relief road was included in the South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (Jan 2015) which will be subject to a Regional Transport Plan which work is currently underway and led by the Cardiff Capital Region.

As the local highway and planning authority in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council recognises that the construction of new infrastructure can facilitate economic development in an area as well as mitigate against the adverse effects of traffic congestion and poor air quality in an area.

The ability of the Council to progress this proposed scheme would be subject to the outcome of a comprehensive business case and appraisal covering this scheme and then securing funding to take it through the various stages. The Welsh Government's latest transportation strategy "Llwybr Newydd : The Wales Transport Strategy 2021" clearly identifies the priority to focus on walking , cycling and public transport to encourage a modal shift from car usage. In the recent Roads Review undertaken by the Welsh Government, only two transportation projects in RCT were identified as part of the process and underwent the review, the Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road was not one of these schemes as it was not sufficiently developed to be assessed.

A historic evaluation of the potential route was undertaken between 10-15 years ago and there were significant constraints identified together with a very basic indicative range of estimated cost. Due to the very indicative findings the route did not progress to feasibility stage, with the then Welsh Government not supportive of this due to the issues involved and funding constraints. I confirm that RCT has not bid for any funding from the Welsh Government to undertake a feasibility study and costings of the Upper Rhondda Fach Relief Road and has also not utilised its own resources for a said study.

The Council is always actively exploring ways of improving transport links within the Rhondda Fach and ensuring that communities will benefit from the investment taking place in the South East Wales Metro. It should be noted that the Council has:

- Undertook minor infrastructure works along the existing Rhondda Fach active travel route for the removal of selective barriers to provide better access and undertaken various enhancements to ensure that the active travel route meets current standards.
- Previously invested over £1M including a substantial contribution from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to undertake the upgrade of nearly 2 miles of main road carriageway along the Rhondda Fach.
- Has been involved in a Transport for Wales study to investigate options for improving transport links between the Rhondda Fach and the new transport hub in Porth.
- Constructed Phase 1 and 2 of the Active Travel route from Maerdy to Pontygwaith which will link to the existing Active Travel route at Pontygwaith. Applied for funding from Welsh Government to construct Phase 3 and 4 in 2024/25 and design of Phase 5 with construction in 2025/26.

Yours sincerely,



**Y Cyngorydd Andrew Morgan OBE**  
**Arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf**  
Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE  
Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

**Swyddfa'r Cabinet Cabinet Office**  
4ydd Llawr, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 2 Llys Cadwyn,  
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#### **Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen | Available in alternative formats and languages**

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog. We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.



**MAE EICH DATA O BWYS** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/diogeludata](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/diogeludata)  
**YOUR DATA MATTERS** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection)



Re: P-06-1299 Eich deiseb / Your petition

I feel there is a need to reiterate how dangerous it is to be cut off due to road traffic accidents/fires as we have witnessed.

There is one stretch of road, that has no other way in or out, from the top of North Road Ferndale to Maerdy/Ferndale cemetery (approximately half a mile). If emergency services are needed it would put people's lives at risk.

The new school being built in the Maerdy Ward, to relocate Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn is on this stretch of road and will make a substantial difference to the volume of traffic, on an already congested and gridlocked road, at the start and end of the school day.

This school was never part of the feasibility study.

Lack of local employment opportunities, forces residents to look for jobs elsewhere. Due to the top end of the Rhondda Fach not having a train service and the current bus infrastructure rendering it almost impossible for people to get to work on time and the bus route from Maerdy to Cardiff taking approximately 2 1/2 hours, adding another 5 hours to their working day. Leaves residents no other choice but, to use their own transport.

The Welsh Governments plans to prioritise walking and cycling simply cannot be sustained in The Rhondda Fach, we need the bypass more.

Kind Regards,

Sue Blaney



# Agenda Item 3.5

## **P-06-1338 Extend the bus emergency scheme and develop national bus recovery plan**

This petition was submitted by Andrew Jenkins, having collected 775 signatures online and 250 signatures on paper, making for a total of 1,025 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

During the pandemic the Welsh Government launched the bus emergency scheme (BES) to safeguard the bus network.

The Welsh Government are now looking to bring this scheme to an end, despite passenger numbers not recovering to pre-pandemic levels.

We want to see both the funding secured for this financial year, and a national bus recovery plan co-produced with bus operators, passengers, local authorities and others, in order to build more comprehensive, sustainable bus services.

### **Additional Information:**

Buses are the most used form of public transport.

People use buses each day to get to and from work, schools, college or university, volunteering, shops and leisure amenities, doctors appointments and other key public services and more.

Buses are important in fulfilling Welsh Government aims of easing congestion, reducing carbon emissions, tackling loneliness, promoting social and economic wellbeing and improving access to services.

With the Welsh Government halting new road building, additional investment is needed in public transport.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Neath
- South Wales West



# Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair, Senedd Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

[By Email only]

**03442 640 670**

Rydym yn croesawu  
galwadau yn Gymraeg

Adeiladau Cambrian  
Sqwâr Mount Stuart  
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff CF10 5FL

30 October 2023

Dear Jack,

## **Petition P-06-1338 Extend the Bus Emergency Scheme and develop national bus recovery plan**

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2023 seeking my comments on the issues raised in Petition P-06-1338 – to extend the Bus Emergency Scheme and develop a national bus recovery plan.

I am very concerned about the reduction in the numbers of older people using the concessionary bus pass and the impact this has on health, wellbeing and everyday activities. Earlier this year, CPT Cymru estimated that use of concessionary passes was only 40-50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. There is a risk that additional cuts to bus services will reduce this level even further as the services that older people need will simply not exist.

The issue of public transport and specifically buses is often raised with me and my Advice and Assistance Service by older people. This includes concerns about cuts to bus routes, reduced timetables and cancellations with little or no notice. Older people often describe public and community transport as 'lifelines', enabling access to local amenities, being able to volunteer, and keep in contact with families and friends. The availability and reliability of public and community transport have been significant and long-running issues for older people, particularly when attending medical appointments. In one recent case, an older person faced a two hour wait for a bus to return home from a hospital appointment for what was a relatively short journey, as a result of earlier scheduled bus services not running.

Regular bus journeys can also build personal connections with drivers and other passengers. The Friends of the 65 Bus group in Monmouthshire have described how

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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.

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[www.olderpeoplewales.com](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com)

sometimes the absence of regulars is noted by the drivers who alert other passengers. In one case, this led to finding out that someone had experienced a fall and the group organised help with tasks until the person was well enough to return to using the bus and do their shopping again.

The Welsh Government's Bus Emergency Scheme has already come to an end and been replaced by the Bus Transition Fund. The impact of this change is now being felt as bus operators make cuts to services. The petition calls for a national bus recovery plan co-produced with bus operators, passengers, local authorities and others, in order to build more comprehensive, sustainable bus services. I understand from the Joint Statement on the new Bus Transition Fund (16 June 2023) that the Bus Transition Fund was developed collaboratively by Local Authorities, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and the industry. This goes some way to addressing the action called for in the petition of a national bus recovery plan but the petition specifically requests co-production with passengers, something that was not mentioned in the Joint Statement in June 2023.

I am concerned that the voice of older people and passengers more broadly is not only heard but acted upon in future decisions about bus funding and bus routes. While it may not be possible to maintain every bus service at its current level, older people must be able to access buses in order visit friends and family, work, volunteer, attend healthcare appointments and other services and generally do the things that matter to us all.

Reduced bus services will make it harder for some older people to stay in work or take part in volunteering activities. A significant number of older people continue to work (in Wales, 9.2% of people over 65 are in employment) while almost a third of people aged over 65 volunteer in some capacity. Both the paid employment and voluntary activity undertaken by older people make a significant contribution to Wales's economy (volunteering by older people was valued at £483M in a 2018 report by Bangor University and expected to rise). Unpaid carers who rely on bus services will also be adversely affected: around 55% of carers in Wales are over the age of 55 and unpaid carers are more likely to be female, older and living in deprived communities. Future bus services should not be restricted to standard office hours and weekdays, leaving older people unable to get around in the evenings and weekends.

Bus services also play a key role in tackling loneliness and isolation and are a vital aspect of Age Friendly Communities. The World Health Organisation (WHO) define Age Friendly Communities as being places in which older people, communities, policies, services, settings and structures work together in partnership to support and enable us all to age well. The WHO identify eight essential features of Age-Friendly communities, known as the 'eight domains', which are: Outdoor spaces and buildings; Transport; Housing; Social participation; Respect and social inclusion; Civic participation and employment; Communication and information; Community support and health services. (For more information, see: [What are Age-friendly communities? - Older People's Commissioner for Wales.](#))

The development of Age Friendly Communities is supported by the Welsh Government as demonstrated in 'Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society'. Transport and

connectivity are essential parts of making communities more age friendly for all citizens. The Welsh Government's strategy recognises the role that transport plays in creating Age Friendly Communities and improving bus services is one of the strategy's three priority areas for transport. In order to be meaningful, the strategy needs to be taken into account in Welsh Government action on bus services.

I have followed with interest discussions in the Senedd about a potential campaign to encourage people to use bus services. Any transport campaign needs to understand the reasons why some older people have not returned to using the concessionary pass. These include loss of confidence post-pandemic, the move away from printed or paper timetables and towards online-only information, issues around quality of service, reliability and driver training/behaviour. Further research is needed in order for any campaign to stand the greatest chance of success.


While commercial passenger numbers have struggled to return to pre-pandemic levels, community transport demand has resumed at its previous level. Community transport has a history of providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs. It is sometimes the only means of transport for many people. However, community transport provision is not available in all areas where it would benefit older people and requires more secure and sustainable funding.

The proposed Welsh Government Bus Bill is intended to address some of the issues around provision of bus services and I look forward to engaging with the legislative proposals in due course. Nevertheless, the impact of cuts to bus services is impacting older people now and action to address this cannot be put off until legislation is passed and implemented.

The Welsh public sector is currently facing a very challenging time in terms of financial settlements and spending pressures. However, there is a risk that older people bear a disproportionate burden from cuts to services. The combined impact of cuts to different types of services needs to be assessed. For example, cuts to bus services should not be viewed in isolation from cuts to other services used and valued by older people. Effective Equality Impact Assessments should be undertaken to understand the impact of proposed changes on groups with protected characteristics, including older people. These Assessments should also be published in order to aid scrutiny of decision making.

I hope you find these comments useful in your consideration of Petition P-06-1338.

Yours sincerely,



Heléna Herklots CBE

**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

# CAROLYN THOMAS

## MS FOR NORTH WALES / AS DROS GOGLEDD CYMRU

Jack Sargeant MS

Chair, Senedd Petitions Committee

Sent by email only.

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Public Bus Transport

Dear Jack,

Thank you for inviting me to contribute regarding public bus transport.

Public transport is a lifeline for many, ensuring that nobody is left behind. It is a social issue as well as maintaining access to work, education, and services. I know in rural areas; the bus journey is when regular passengers enjoy a social chat with each other and the driver.

Public Transport employs large numbers of people and impacts on every area of the Government, access to education, jobs, culture, tourism, economy and medical appointments.

We have heard at the culture and sports committee that public transport is essential to ensure fair access to swimming pools and sports clubs. Access to medical appointments is one of the biggest concerns for residents, especially older people.

Delivering public bus transport is expensive, it needs to integrate with school transport to help subsidise the journeys for the rest of the day, this already happens in North Wales. I am aware the Learner Traveller measure is being reviewed but we need to understand the cost and resource issue. When I was Cabinet member, 3 years ago, we used to estimate the cost of transporting a child was approximately £700 a year, this has increased significantly because of inflationary pressures.

At the local government and housing committee, the leader of the WLGA spoke about the daily issue of ensuring there are enough operators to fulfil all the school transport contracts and make sure no school child is left behind. There has also been a 40% price increase creating a massive budget pressure.

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# CAROLYN THOMAS

## MS FOR NORTH WALES / AS DROS GOGLEDD CYMRU

I have always been concerned that CJs will be able to deliver transport, so need some caution, time and resources. Bus transport is hugely complex, one authority has 450 contracts, 350 are school and officers have good daily communication with operators, helping them to maintain services when they may be about to collapse, or ask them to step in last minute when needed. Accountability is important, ensuring that no child or vulnerable adult is left behind. Operators are concerned that TfW will be delivering bus transport, they are used to dealing directly with the local authorities and have built a good relationship.

Procurement of buses (capital expenditure) is expensive at £350k, to £450k and a service could cost £350 to £700k to run, if journeys are not commercial then they stop. Councils have stepped in with subsidies but many authorities have withdrawn these over the last few years of austerity, and I am aware more have put them on the table as cost savings which may mean more services will be terminated.

If Welsh Government through Transport for Wales could help with procurement using scale of purchase it may help with sustainability for operators and local authorities or CJs commissioning services.

Residents like a scheduled bus service but many are having to accept change and move to a bookable Flecsi service which has been commissioned by TfW and is heavily subsidised by Welsh Government but is very welcome.

Reliability and clear timetabling is important to encourage people to use public transport and have faith in a service. One bad experience can put them off altogether. One bus timetable change by an operator can mean that 150 bus stops must be updated, it is labour intensive and falls to local authorities who do not have resources.

The Traveline app is good, google also provides reliable information these days regarding nearest bus stop and bus number. Bus operators will also provide information if people know the operator and can phone up.

A friendly, helpful bus driver and rail platform assistant is invaluable and make all the difference between people having confidence to use public transport especially if they have any physical or mental difficulties.

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# CAROLYN THOMAS

## MS FOR NORTH WALES / AS DROS GOGLEDD CYMRU

Recruitment and retention of drivers is an issue, Arriva Wales pays drivers less in Wales which is unfair and causes an issue as they cross border and pass colleagues on different pay daily. Many drivers are being lost to operators that provide excursions and holidays which is a growing industry.

If local authorities were able to get an operator's licence, then their Streetscene/waste driver operatives could maybe get a special licence and training to become bus drivers and fill in gaps left behind by operators. However, many local authorities are currently reluctant to take on more responsibility because of lack of resources.

Integrated fares that can be used across operators is important as is maintaining cross border transport.

Regarding capped fares and free fares, feedback is that capped fares do encourage more use (eg in RCT) and if people pay a nominal £1 or £2 fee rather than free, it is valued more, there has also been some antisocial behaviour when it has been free. Some areas in England have not benefited from increased patronage where there have been capped fares.

Targeted interventions could be useful. I would like to propose a scheme where residents of new developments get a free bus pass for one year using 106 funding, this has happened in a new development in Chester.

Many over 60 concessionary passes are not being used, and there has been a fall in usage since COVID. With the help of the older persons commissioner, Age Cymru, local authorities and other organisations, there could a targeted campaign to provide information providing information to give confidence.

Transport Focus and CPT would be keen to see a campaign for younger people. In Scotland, under 22s can access free bus travel. Feedback is this has caused some issue with antisocial behaviour and could get mixed up with school transport (learner traveller measure). There is currently the MyTravelPass in Wales that offers a 30% discount. This should be promoted more.

Public bus transport is highly subsidised and WG has provided over £200m funding support to maintain bus services across Wales. Since the pandemic less people are now using bus services. The last emergency funding has come to an end, and I welcome from 1<sup>st</sup> April this year Welsh Government have introduced the replacement Bus Network Grant (BNG).

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# CAROLYN THOMAS

## MS FOR NORTH WALES / AS DROS GOGLEDD CYMRU

It is in addition to the £25m Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG). The BNG will provide local authorities across Wales with £39m to secure bus services that they deem socially necessary that the commercial market will not provide when Bus Transition Fund (BTF) comes to an end. The new scheme will include specific conditions that will encourage improved regional co-ordination of bus services; network ticketing and the need to ensure accurate and up to date information about the bus services provided.

BNG will bring about stability to the industry as well as increased public control of bus services. It will also act as a bridge from the emergency funding that has been provided to bus franchising. BNG will be a twelve-month scheme. From 1 April 2025 Welsh Government said they will aim to introduce one scheme that will replace BNG and BSSG.

I welcome the reform of public transport towards one network, one timetable, one ticket. Operators were concerned regarding franchising, but they now welcome it. I am concerned that it will be very expensive to deliver and hope there will be funding to deliver it.

Once again, thank you for requesting my input, and if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Carolyn Thomas

Member of the Senedd for North Wales

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CarolynThomasMS



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Pack Page 131



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**P-06-1338 Extend the bus emergency scheme and develop national bus recovery plan – Correspondence from the petitioner to Committee, 16.04.24**

Annwyl Jack Sargeant,

I would like to thank you, the committee and the committee clerks for the work you've done on my petition.

A lot has happened since this petition was created, most significant of which includes the end of the Bus Emergency Scheme and its successor Bus Transition Fund, the introduction of the Bus Network Grant and changes at a local level at the way buses are being delivered. In my own home area, a number of services that were cut last year have been reinstated during the contract negotiations between the Council and bus operators.

The reinstating of some services have already begun to make a difference, allowing some people to once again easily access schools, colleges, work, volunteering and key services.

With the bus bill that will be laid before the Senedd this year very much on the horizon, and work already being taken to lay the groundwork for a new model of bus delivery, the picture right now is quite different from what it was at this time last year.

That being said, there are still considerable challenges facing the sector. While passenger numbers may be slowly recovering, we are still not at pre-pandemic levels and certainly a long way off where we need to be to have a comprehensive and sustainable bus network.

After reading through the responses received from both the Older People's Commissioner, Helena Herklots, and Carolyn Thomas MS, I would like to express my thanks to them both and provide the committee with my response to some of the points they have raised.

Carolyn Thomas refers, quite rightly in my opinion, to the benefit that would come from a greater public control over bus services. However, public control should certainly be accompanied by public involvement. She will remember that at the last meeting of the Cross Party Group on Public Transport, that she chairs, I asked several questions to TfW and others about passenger involvement in the long promised bus campaign. Sadly, that campaign has been and gone with limited public engagement and involvement – I'd be very interested to know whether members of the committee noticed, and would certainly like to know if TfW and the Confederation of Passenger Transport felt that it made any impact?

Both letters to you make reference to the considerable impact being felt by passengers as a result of the challenges facing the network. The Older People's Commissioner talks about the impact on the health, wealth and wellbeing of many older people from loss of service and changing timetables and routes. The Commissioner also notes the lack of older person involvement (and passengers more broadly) in current conversations going on about how challenges are being met.

An example of a small group that have made a big difference is the Friends of the Number 65 Bus who, through creating a community of passengers, have helped people who had previously been regular passengers to get back onto the service.

I am considering establishing a similar group for passengers of the bus I catch every day, as the first service of the day has become a pseudo-coffee morning on wheels. If I do, I'm more than happy for any member of the committee to pay us a visit! I'm sure there are many others with similar groups, and it is disappointing that these groups and individuals have not been included as key stakeholders in how we collectively meet the challenge facing our services.

This is why I consider that the petition request for a national bus recovery plan, co-produced by passengers and other stakeholders is still one that should be acted upon by Welsh Government. While the funding going into services and the promise of the bus bill is certainly welcome, in the words of the Commissioner - *"action cannot be put off until legislation is passed and implemented."*

Once again, I want to thank you for your consideration of this petition.

Cofion gorau

Andrew

## Agenda Item 3.6

### **P-06-1348 Commission suitable NHS services in Wales for people with EDS or hypermobility spectrum disorders**

This petition was submitted by Natasha Evans-Jones, having collected a total of 1,125 signatures.

#### **Text of Petition:**

Historically those showing signs of Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS) or HSD have been referred to rheumatology departments. In 2021, they were directed to stop seeing these patients in favour of their diagnosis and management in primary care, which is not currently equipped for this role. A unique tertiary service in England has also closed to out of area patients. This situation has led to inequalities in access to healthcare for those with EDS and HSD in Wales resulting in unacceptable suffering.

#### **Additional Information:**

Ehlers-Danlos syndromes are genetic connective tissue disorders with body-wide symptoms which can be disabling, affecting all aspects of life. One type is life-threatening. Symptoms of most types include musculoskeletal problems, chronic pain and fatigue, gastrointestinal disturbance, fragile skin, pelvic and bladder problems, autonomic dysfunction and anxiety. Twelve of the 13 classified types can be diagnosed via genetic testing. There is no single test for the most common type (hEDS) or for the related hypermobility spectrum disorders (HSD) which makes diagnosis challenging. Together, hEDS and HSD are fairly common. A study in 2019 using data from Welsh hospitals and GP records found that 1 in 500 people are affected (Demmler et al, <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/11/e031365>).

The situation in Wales is causing suffering for those waiting for diagnosis, those on inappropriate treatment pathways, and their families.

#### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Clwyd
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1348  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00507/24

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

19 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February about Petition P-06-1348 Commission suitable NHS services in Wales for people with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) or hypermobility.

The role of the NHS Executive is to help ensure evidence-based approaches are utilised to improve patient outcomes and service sustainability and that learning is shared on a local, regional, and national level to drive the shift of resources locally in primary and community care.

The networks in place have built multi-disciplinary and multi-professional structures that provides credibility with the range of staff providing the services, and the patients in receipt of them.

The relevant networks relating to EDS are the networks for musculoskeletal conditions and rare diseases. The Musculoskeletal Strategic Network is in the process of appointing a Network Manager. The national clinical lead for Musculoskeletal Conditions is Dr Rob Letchford and he can be contacted at [Robert.letchford@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Robert.letchford@wales.nhs.uk). The intention is for a Musculoskeletal network to be created in the NHS Executive structure from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, but this is dependent on appointments. They will require time to bed in their structure and approach and 2024 will be a transition year for the Network to establish itself.

The national rare diseases implementation network is already in place. More information can be found here: [Rare Diseases - NHS Wales Executive](#). You can contact them via [NHSWHC\\_RDIG@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:NHSWHC_RDIG@wales.nhs.uk).

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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.

The Welsh Government sets the strategic direction for quality of care and planning of services. We do not endorse specific approaches to treatment nor fund their advocacy. The logistical support requested for supporting the GP toolkit and would be for the NHS via the NHS Executive to consider.

I hope this helps clarify the remits of the relevant organisations.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1348  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/01941/23

14/4/24

Dear Eluned,

Thank you for your letter. As advised, we have emailed Dr Rob Letchford (MSK clinical lead), and the rare disease implementation network. We plan to meet with both soon and agree that a collaboration with them both will be helpful.

Within an earlier letter that HSD/ HEDS can be managed through using the GP toolkit. Although this is correct in practice this has rarely happened. I support those with EDS/HSD and most GP's do not feel confident enough to use the toolkit, and often refuse to diagnose. With rheumatology also refusing to see those patients with any hypermobility they are left to pay private or go without care. This is wholly unacceptable. If the plan is to continue to refuse patients referrals to rheumatology, will GPs be getting additional training so that they can support patients best?

We understand that unfortunately there is no treatment for EDS/HSD due to it being a genetic condition. But there are support services that can help a person's wellbeing and quality of life. Support services like pain management, occupational therapy, and physio at the early stages of symptoms allow patients to better manage their EDS/ HSD symptoms. But with EDS/HSD it is usually on average 19 years until a diagnosis is given. With rheumatology refusing to see patients, and GP's not being confident in using the GP toolkit patients are left longer and often deteriorate in their condition. Long term this has an economic impact, for example less ability to work and contribute to the economy.

EDS/ HSD does not have a pathway for care, with EDS/HSD affecting around 1/500 people (Demmler et al, 2019) we think it's time that a care pathway is created. Patients are being left without diagnosis, support, and care. How would we go about creating this?

Yours sincerely,

Natasha Evans-Jones (She/her)

Lead engagement and community volunteer for Wales

Area coordinator for North Wales

The Ehlers-Danlos Support UK

t: 0208 736 5604 | m: 07376008068 | w: [www.ehlers-danlos.org](http://www.ehlers-danlos.org) | Helpline: 0800 907 8518

The Ehlers-Danlos Support UK is a Charity registered in England and Wales (No. 1157027) and Scotland (SCO46712). Registered Company No. 8924646. Registered Address:  
Devonshire House, Manor Way, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 1QQ

# Agenda Item 3.7

## **P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza**

This petition was submitted by Sam Swash, having collected a total of 1,795 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Gaza and the Palestinian people are facing a humanitarian crisis as bombs rain down indiscriminately on residential buildings, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, and refugee camps. Thousands of innocent civilians, including more than 3,500 children, have been killed, with many more seriously injured or displaced. The Welsh Government has previously provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine following the Russian invasion in 2022. It should now do all it can to provide aid to the Palestinian people.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Alyn and Deeside
- North Wales

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip  
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1387  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00159/24

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN  
petitions@senedd.wales

12 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 February 2024 regarding Petition P-06-1387 - Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza. The Welsh Government has made donations to a number of DEC appeals in recent years and will certainly consider doing so again for any future appeals including an appeal for Gaza should one be launched.

I am regularly updated on the activities and positions of the DEC by my officials. I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**  
Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a'r Prif Chwip  
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip

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

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[Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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.

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# Agenda Item 3.8

## **P-06-1391 Introduce regulation of the dog grooming sector, to protect the welfare of dogs and rights of owners**

This petition was submitted by Brian Howell, having collected a total of 284 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We believe that the establishment of clear guidelines, licensing requirements, and industry standards will aid the welfare and safety of dogs during grooming procedures. There's no regulatory framework at all of the sector, whether at local authority or national level. It doesn't fall within the oversight of any charity or the RSPCA.

The last 3 years has seen an exponential growth in dog ownership and the businesses that service their needs. Establishing standards is long overdue.

### **Additional Information:**

1. Animal Welfare: It is imperative to prioritize the well-being and humane treatment of dogs. Regulation will promote responsible ownership, minimise stress levels, and reduce potential harm/injury caused by unqualified/negligent groomers.
2. Training/Certification: Unregulated dog grooming has lead to untrained individuals operating without the necessary knowledge of breed-specific needs, hygiene practices, handling, or grooming procedures. A minimum standard of Animal First Aid should be a pre-requisite component.
3. Health and Safety: Minimum health and safety guidelines to maintain a safe environment. Correct sanitation, grooming equipment maintenance and compliance with hygiene protocols, crucial in preventing the spread of infections/parasites/diseases.
4. Licensing/Inspection: Training/insurance verification and compliance with health and safety regulations.
5. Setting standards: Regulation offers owners an assurance of standards by identifying qualified practitioners.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd  
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1391  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00233/24

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
[Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales](mailto:Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales)

14 March 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 7 March, requesting Petition P-06-1391 and additional information provided by the petitioner, be considered as evidence in the [consultation](#) on the licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities, and exhibits, which closed 1 March.

I would like to thank the committee for bringing this valuable evidence to my attention. I can confirm dog grooming was in-scope of the consultation and this evidence has been accepted as a late submission. Work has now begun to assess all evidence provided and a summary of responses will be published in due course.

Yours sincerely,

**Lesley Griffiths AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd**  
**Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd**

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@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.

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# Agenda Item 5

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

Document is Restricted