

Concise Minutes – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 (Senedd)

Meeting date: Monday, 13 January 2025

Meeting time: 13.30 – 15.40

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/14788>

Hybrid

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Jenny Rathbone MS (Chair) Mick Antoniw MS Jane Dodds MS Altaf Hussain MS Julie Morgan MS Sioned Williams MS
Witnesses:	Andrew Charles, Welsh Government Claire Germain, Welsh Government Lorna Hall, Deputy Director for Equality and Human Rights, Welsh Government Amelia John, Welsh Government Jane Hutt MS, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip
Committee Staff:	Richard Thomas (Clerk) Angharad Roche (Deputy Clerk) Claire Thomas (Researcher) Gareth David Thomas (Researcher)



1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

No apologies, substitutions or any declarations of interest were made.

2 Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Budget 2025–2026

Members heard evidence from the following:

Jane Hutt, MS, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Amelia John, Director, Communities & Social Justice

Claire Germain, Deputy Director, Tackling Poverty & Supporting Families

Lorna Hall, Deputy Director, Equality & Human Rights, Welsh Government

Andrew Charles, Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities, Welsh Government

3 Papers to note

Members noted the papers.

- 3.1 Correspondence from the Department for Work and Pensions regarding the Committee's inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap
- 3.2 Correspondence from the Chair of the Senedd's Cross Party Group on Human Rights to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding advancing Human Rights in Wales
- 3.3 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- 3.4 Correspondence from British Gas to the Equality and Social Justice Committee regarding further information concerning the follow- up inquiry into Fuel Poverty in Wales
- 3.5 Correspondence from Tenovus Cancer Care to the Chair regarding the increase in employer National Insurance Contributions
- 3.6 Correspondence between the Chair and the Ministry of Justice regarding speech, language and communication needs of young people
- 3.7 Correspondence to the Chair from the Llywydd regarding the Chair's Forum decision on inter-parliamentary bodies
- 3.8 Correspondence to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and the Constitution Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement
- 3.9 Correspondence to the Chair from Cardiff County Council regarding the Committee's inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap
- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(iv) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

Members agreed the motion.

5 Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Budget 2025–2026: consideration of evidence

Members considered the evidence and agreed to write to the Future Generations Commissioner to ask about ways in which he has been able to reduce budget spending.

Members also agreed to write to the Children, Young People and Education Committee to ask them to consider posing questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Education during their scrutiny session on the Draft Budget concerning uprating the eligibility criteria and cash value of Welsh benefits – such as the Education Maintenance Allowance, the School Essentials Grant and Free School Meals for pupils in secondary schools – so as to bring them in line with inflation.