

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 20 January 2025

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

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

(Pages 1 – 47)

### 2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1482 Ban smartphones in all schools in Wales with exemptions for exceptional circumstances

(Pages 48 – 60)

2.2 P-06-1468 Set stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments received by Members of Senedd

(Pages 61 – 68)

2.3 P-06-1469 Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate

(Pages 69 – 75)

2.4 P-06-1470 Scrap the Racist and ridiculous Anti-Racist Wales Plan

(Pages 76 – 81)

2.5 P-06-1477 A new Senedd Act to Recall Local Government Councillors

(Pages 82 – 88)

2.6 P-06-1483 Give neighbours their say when holiday let owners start applying for licences

(Pages 89 – 98)

2.7 P-06-1487 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover; make safe for bus users and reduce the speed limit

(Pages 99 – 104)



2.8 P-06-1493 Ensure diagnosis and treatment for people suffering from adverse Covid-19 vaccine side effects  
(Pages 105 – 113)

2.9 P-06-1494 Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts  
(Pages 114 – 128)

### **3 Updates to previous petitions**

3.1 P-06-1184 Immediately ban the use of toxic lead in all ammunition in Wales... lead is killing our wildlife!  
(Pages 129 – 131)

#### **Women's Health Services (The following three petitions will be considered together)**

3.2 P-06-1220 Increase funding available for Women's Health Services, Education and Awareness  
(Pages 132 – 133)

3.3 P-06-1242 Improve Endometriosis Healthcare in Wales  
(Pages 134 – 139)

3.4 P-06-1444 Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd  
(Pages 140 – 148)

3.5 P-06-1258 Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge  
(Pages 149 – 150)

3.6 P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza  
(Pages 151 – 153)

3.7 P-06-1425 We ask the Welsh Government to reverse its decision to stop T2 buses calling at Garndolbenmaen  
(Pages 154 – 157)

- 3.8 P-06-1439 Improve vital late night public transport infrastructure in South and South West Wales  
(Pages 158 – 160)
- 3.9 P-06-1454 Calling Welsh Government to provide urgent mental health support for New Dads  
(Pages 161 – 164)
- 3.10 P-06-1452 Meat-free Monday in every school in Wales  
(Pages 165 – 167)

**The following two petitions will be considered together**

- 3.11 P-06-1474 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin & Ynyslas visitor centres  
(Page 168)
- 3.12 P-05-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve  
(Pages 169 – 190)
- 3.13 P-06-1464 Allow Welsh families who have experienced Baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain baby loss certificate  
(Pages 191 – 193)

**4 Papers to note**

- 4.1 P-06-1380 Make Blue badge Applications Lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis  
(Pages 194 – 196)
- 4.2 P-06-1414 Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest  
(Page 197)

**5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of today's business:**

**Private**

Document is Restricted

## Ban smartphones in all schools in Wales (with exemptions for exceptional circumstances)

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/9617

**Petition Number:** [P-06-1482](#)

**Petition title:** Ban smartphones in all schools in Wales (with exemptions for exceptional circumstances)

**Text of petition:** Inspired by the movements Smartphone Free Childhood and Delay Smartphones, as well as recent compelling research on the profound negative effects of smartphones on children, we call on Senedd Cymru to ban them in all schools in Wales, with exemptions for exceptional circumstances. Smartphone use poses significant wellbeing and safeguarding concerns. We are deeply worried about our children's social development and mental health and believe all pupils have the right to a smartphone-free school.

Children's mental health is at an all-time low, with smartphones & social media major contributing factors.

Research highlights the detrimental effects of smartphones on children, with a UK Parliamentary Select Committee report stating the risks of screen time outweigh the benefits. The BMJ recently called for a precautionary public health response. Smartphones disrupt brain development, lower self-esteem, trigger anxiety, and expose children to harmful content. Reports include teenagers witnessing real-life killings on social media and cases of suicide due to 'sextortion.' 83% of parents believe smartphones are harmful, with 58% supporting a ban for under-16s (Parentkind poll)



Countries including France, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and China, along with many UK and US schools, have implemented smartphone bans, leading to improved student focus and well-being. UNESCO and the UK government have also called for bans on smartphones in schools.

## 1. Background

### 1.1. Ownership of smartphones by children and young people

The Primary School Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 2022-23 was undertaken by the School Health Research Network (SHRN) in partnership with Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government. The survey included 354 primary schools and 32,606 pupils in Wales.

Key findings from the survey included:

- **63% of learners** reported having a smartphone.
- **83% of Year 6 learners** owned a smartphone, compared to **43% of Year 3 learners**
- There was little difference between family affluence groups in smartphone ownership.

In 2023, Ofcom reported that 26% of five to seven-year-olds, 61% of eight to 11-year-olds and 96% of 12 to 15-year-olds had their own mobile phone.

### 1.2. Impact on educational attainment

An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) report, Students, digital devices and success (2024) found that on average **two-thirds of 15-year-olds across OECD countries reported being distracted using digital devices**, including phones, in most or every maths class. In addition, around **60% of pupils got distracted by other pupils using digital devices**.

It also suggested that data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed a “tangible” association between the use of digital devices in schools and learning outcomes. Students who reported being distracted by peers using digital devices in some, most or every maths class scored significantly lower in maths tests, equivalent to three-quarters of a year’s worth of education.

However, researchers at King’s College London found that when gender, social class and school behaviour were controlled for, PISA data showed that students in schools **with phone bans actually had lower achievement across their PISA test scores than those in schools that allowed phone use.**

### 1.3. Pupil behaviour

The Scottish Government’s Behaviour in Scottish schools: research report 2023, showed that the **abusive use of mobile phones and digital technologies was one of the most frequently experienced serious disruptive behaviours** observed or experienced by secondary school staff. This included pupils using mobile phones to bully or harass other pupils and staff and filming incidents with footage then posted on social media.

The Office for National Statistics’ (ONS) Online bullying in England and Wales: year ending March 2020 estimated that one in five children in England and Wales have experienced online bullying. **Nearly three out of four children (72%) who had experienced online bullying behaviour experienced at least some of it at or during school time.**

### 1.4. Mental health and well-being

A 2019 report by the UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), Screen-based activities and children and young people’s mental health and psychosocial wellbeing: a systematic map of reviews, found an association between the two but was **unable to prove a causal relationship.**

The UK Parliament’s Education Committee’s inquiry Screen time: impacts on education and wellbeing (May 2024) heard evidence suggesting that **screen time has a generally negative impact on the mental health of children and young people.** They heard that children and young people are **at risk of encountering online harms while using screens.** These included cyberbullying, racism, misogynistic abuse, pornography, and material promoting violence and self-

harm. In addition, they heard that images posted online can have a negative impact on children and young people's perception of themselves, increasing body dissatisfaction and eating disorders.

## 1.5. Positive uses of smartphones in schools

There are potential positives from allowing mobile phones in schools. These include:

- Use for digital learning.
- Research in lessons.
- Medical reasons. Some children need access to their mobile phone to support their health, such as to keep track of their medicine schedule or monitor their diabetes.
- Schools' internal communication.
- Maintaining regular contact with family members for this with caring responsibilities

## 2. Welsh Government action

In answer to an Oral Question on 12 November 2024, Lynne Neagle, the Cabinet Secretary for Education said:

All schools currently are able to ban mobile phones in schools if they want to, and indeed, most schools don't permit the use of mobile phones in the classroom. [...] we are publishing a behaviour toolkit to help schools, and that will include classroom management strategies and research on managing behaviour, including mobile phone usage in schools.

For me, it's really important that [children] know how to seek help as well if they're upset about something that they've seen. We are doing lots of work on keeping children and young people safe online. We've got a dedicated area of Hwb. We've got a young persons' reference group, which we're currently refreshing, and there's also lots of helpful information for parents about how to keep their children and young people safe.

In her letter to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary also stated that online safety in particular is a key feature with the mandatory Curriculum for Wales:

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code (2022) and that educating young people on how to engage with social media is a cross-curricular issue.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2022, the Children, Young People and Education Committee undertook an inquiry into Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners. As part of the inquiry, the Committee considered whether young people were using mobile phones during school hours to sexually harass their peers, and whether schools had consistent policies on mobile phone use during the school day.

The Committee heard differing evidence including that ‘mobiles phones have no place in the classroom’ and that mobile phones can be an ‘excellent learning tool’. They heard that teachers already use smartphones as part of their teaching and that ‘the issue is therefore not with the phone but in the abuse of the phone’.

The Committee concluded that whatever the nuances of each school’s position on mobile phone use, schools should have clear, well-enforced policies that are widely understood by learners, parents and staff. They recommended that:

the Welsh Government write to local authorities and/or schools to ensure that schools have clear policies on acceptable mobile phone use by learners throughout the school day, those policies are well-communicated to learners, staff and parents, and are consistently enforced by school staff.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation stating:

The use of mobile phones in schools is included the Welsh Government Behaviour management in the classroom: guidance for secondary schools. This guidance dates back to 2012 and all areas of technology have evolved considerably in the last 10 years. My officials will consider changes that might be required to this guidance alongside the All Wales attendance policy and the Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units guidance.

In her letter to the Petitions Committee, the Cabinet Secretary says that a behaviour toolkit is due to be published early this year (2025). The toolkit will include reference to the use of mobile phones in schools and keeping safe online.

## 4. Other UK countries

### 4.1. England

In February 2024, the Department for Education in England published non-statutory guidance [Mobile Phones in Schools](#). This states that:

schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

It also states:

schools should recognise that a need for mobile phone access for some pupils may depend on their individual circumstances, including at home. Schools should allow flexibility in their policy for these pupils and consider including arrangements in other relevant policies (such as a young carers policy).

In answer to a [Written Parliamentary Question in October 2024](#), the UK confirmed that it would continue with the approach set out in the February 2024 guidance.

### 4.2. Scotland

The Scottish Government issued [Guidance on Mobile Phones in Scotland's Schools](#) in August 2024. It concluded that a national ban was not 'appropriate or feasible' but said schools and councils could introduce restrictions and limitations if they wished.

### 4.3. Northern Ireland

In September 2024, Northern Ireland's Department of Education published [Guidance for Schools on Pupils' Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day](#). This states that school leaders, in conjunction with Boards of Governors, should develop and implement an approach to pupils' use of personal mobile phones and other similar devices that best suits their

school context and phase of education. It also says that the Department recommends that Boards of Governors and principals/leaders should take steps to restrict the use of mobile phones and other similar devices for pupils' personal use throughout the school day, including during lunch and recreational periods.

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 LN/10323/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

20 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your recent correspondence which included reference to the Petition P-06-1482 to ban smartphones in all schools in Wales (with exemptions for exceptional circumstances).

Our current generation of learners are growing up with the internet and social media and have access to a range of digital technology and devices. It has become an integral part of their lives and is something they and educational settings are navigating as technology evolves.

When managed correctly, access to the online world can be educational, informative and a great way for children and young people to stay in touch with family and friends. Teachers regularly find innovative ways of integrating digital technology into classroom teaching and when used in a positive context this can be a valuable learning resource tool.

Often, the biggest challenge for schools around mobile phones and social media is not what goes on in school or during school hours, but what happens outside of the school environment. The instant, real-time access to social media, messaging apps and the internet can unquestionably lead to issues that have a detrimental impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Whilst policies on mobile phone usage within the school day are a matter for schools and governing bodies to address, I am aware of the impact mobile phone usage in school is having on school attendance and behaviour. When setting their mobile phone and behaviour policies, we encourage schools to consider the effect mobiles could have on learning and learner wellbeing. Where headteachers consider the use of mobile phones in school is having a detrimental impact on learners, they already have the authority to ban or restrict their use including other electronic devices such as tablets if they choose to do so. Schools are best placed to make this decision, reflecting on the way they use technology within a school setting and the needs of their learners.

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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.

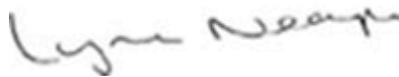
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am also conscious of the need for learners to understand how to use digital devices safely and responsibly. Online safety in particular is a key feature with the mandatory relationship and sexuality education code and educating young people on how to engage with social media a cross-curricular issue. We continue to provide [guidance](#) to schools, learners and parents to raise their awareness towards digital resilience and safety.

Our behaviour toolkit, due to be published early next year, provides evidence and good practice for schools to incorporate into their behaviour policies. This toolkit will include reference to the use of mobile phones in schools and keeping safe online.

I have also discussed the impact of mobile phone usage in schools on learner behaviour at the headteacher conference and directly with trade union representatives, earlier this month.

Yours sincerely



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Dear Petitions Committee,

13th January 2025

*Re: Petition to ban smartphones in all schools in Wales (with exemptions for exceptional circumstances)*

Thank you for forwarding correspondence dated 20.11.24 regarding the above petition from Lynne Neagle to Carolyn Thomas. Please note that Ms Neagle's letter refers to 'mobile phone' use, whereas the petition was created to ban **Smartphones** (hereon referred to as SPs) and not **mobile phones**. Social Media will be referred to as SM.

### **Concerns with Welsh Government's Response**

Whilst Ms Neagle's letter recognises the impact SPs are having on young peoples' mental health and wellbeing, it is lacking in scope and fails to adequately address critical safeguarding concerns outlined in the petition text. These need to be addressed **as a matter of urgency** to protect our young people: the future generations of Wales. The stance of Welsh Government's Education Department is not sufficiently responsive to the evidence and global trends.

### **Social Media**

Ms Neagle's acceptance of SM as being an integral part of life for young people is deeply concerning. Worldwide, many medical professionals and experts are unanimous in their belief that SPs should be banned altogether for under 16s. SM and SPs are a very dangerous combination and it is overwhelmingly clear that they are doing real harm to young people. Schools and governments need to unite in dissuading children from using SM, not encourage it by allowing SPs on their premises.

### **Challenges From Activities Outside School and How Banning SPs Can Help**

While it's true that many challenges related to SPs and SM stem from activities outside school hours, banning SPs in schools addresses a critical aspect of the issue. Schools serve as sanctuaries where healthy habits can be modelled and reinforced, providing a critical break from the relentless pressures of SP and SM use. By prohibiting SPs during school hours, students gain respite from distractions, supporting their mental health and fostering face-to-face communication, academic focus, and mindfulness. For children who spend excessive time on devices—sometimes up to 15 hours daily—this screen-free time is invaluable for social engagement and brain development, equipping them with the resilience and skills to navigate both the real and digital worlds more responsibly.

### **Objective**

We strongly urge the Committee to recommend a nationwide policy that ensures a SP-free educational environment for **all** children in Wales. With campaigns like Smartphone Free Childhood gathering momentum and Global leaders taking bold action, we do not want to see Wales fall behind on such an important issue for our children.

### **NAHT**

The NAHT dismisses this debate as an "unnecessary distraction" from more pressing issues facing schools. However, it's worth considering whether excessive SP use might contribute to some of these challenges. Research has shown that SPs can exacerbate existing learning difficulties, such as reduced attention spans and increased anxiety, which disproportionately affect pupils with additional learning needs. Furthermore, the pervasive influence of SPs impacts

nearly all children, potentially creating new challenges such as screen addiction and impaired social skills. Staff retention issues could be linked to behavioural and other issues caused by SP use. For example, Llanishen High School, which banned SPs six years ago, has a low staff turnover.

### **Harms of SP Use**

#### **Social Media Risks:**

Grooming: Platforms like TikTok and Snapchat are exploited by predators. Sextortion crimes have risen by 66% since 2022 and many children have taken their own lives worldwide due to Sextortion.

Pornography: NSPCC reports nearly all children encounter violent pornography by age 12, with 79% viewing it by 18.

Other concerns include but are not limited to: misogyny, toxic beauty standards, extremism, racism, self-harm and pro-anorexia content, violence, body shaming, drug promotion, life-threatening challenges, homophobia and transphobia, gambling, scams and phishing. 75% of 15-year-olds have been sent beheading videos and 90% of girls and 50% of boys say they are sent unwanted explicit content.

#### **Mental and Physical Health Risks:**

Addiction: The average American spends 2.5 months per year on their SP. Teens receive 237 notifications daily, disrupting focus.

Physical Impact: Blue light disrupts melatonin production, and therefore sleep, and could even contribute to early-onset puberty. SP use has also been linked to obesity, digital eye strain and an increase in myopia, tics/tourettes, neck and back pain, poor posture and hearing problems.

### **Negative impact of SPs on the Brain and Learning**

There is a growing body of research that suggests SP use can have a negative impact on the structure and function of our brains. Some of the potential negative effects include: reduced memory and learning; reduced attention span and focus; reduced happiness in relationships; increased anxiety and depression and reduced empathy.

#### **Academic Performance**

SP distractions reduce cognitive capacity and academic achievements. A study published in the *University of Chicago Press Journals* found that the mere presence of a SP reduces available cognitive capacity.

### **Benefits of SP Bans in Schools**

A 2015 *London School of Economics* study found that test scores increased by more than 6% in schools that banned SPs. The study also found that low-achieving and low-income students improved the most.

Children at schools with effective SP bans get GCSEs 1-2 grades higher.

### **Global Context and Evidence**

More than a year ago, UNESCO called for a global ban on SPs in schools, yet the Welsh Government is effectively condoning and endorsing the use of products that were not designed

for children; are not suitable for children; and are wreaking havoc with childrens' and parents' lives.

### **Calls for Action and Expert Support**

- Bereaved parents, such as those of Molly Russell, Brianna Ghey, and Jools Sweeney, advocate for urgent changes in policy.
- Experts including Dr. Rangan Chaterjee and Jonathan Haight, and public figures such as **Bill Gates** and **Martin Lewis** support limiting access to SPs and SM for under-16s.
- The Irish Medical Association has called for a SP ban for under-16s, deeming their use by children a public health emergency.
- The United States Surgeon General has called for tobacco-style warning labels on SM and Australia has recently banned SM for children under 16.

### **Injustice and Risks of Allowing Individual Schools to Implement SP Bans**

It is unjust that some schools have SP bans while others do not. All children deserve the right to a SP-free educational setting. Most parents support banning SPs in schools.

While Welsh Government is leaving this critical decision to the discretion of individual schools, this approach fails to acknowledge that all children—and indeed, all people—are fundamentally vulnerable to the addictive design of SPs and the harmful content they can expose them to. These risks are universal and not dependent on a school's unique community or circumstances.

We do not believe schools are best placed to make such decisions. While they may know their pupils and communities well, they cannot fully grasp or mitigate the wide-ranging and deeply rooted risks associated with SP use. **The issues of addiction, exposure to harmful content, and mental health consequences affect all children equally and require a unified, nationwide approach, not a fragmented policy that leaves some children unprotected.**

### **Contradictions in the Digital Safety Argument**

Children do not need SPs in school to learn about digital safety. Allowing unregulated devices in schools:

- Risks inappropriate content sharing.
- Exposes children to algorithms serving unsolicited harmful content (e.g., Channel 4 documentary *Swiped* shows how some children can be served violent pornography within minutes of opening a SM account).

### **The Role of Schools and Government**

We believe schools have a crucial role in helping parents manage this issue. A policy change could set a positive example and help shift the norm.

#### **Opportunity Cost:**

The average UK 12-year-old spends approximately 29 hours a week – the equivalent of a part-time job – on their SP. This extensive screen time leaves little opportunity for real-world activities and relationships that are essential for developing life skills necessary for the transition into adulthood. Introducing a blanket ban on SP use could result in young people spending approximately 1,170 fewer hours on their devices annually.

Evidence indicates a significant decline in face-to-face social interactions among adolescents, with a 2022 study revealing a 30% drop in in-person interactions compared to a decade ago. This underscores the importance of fostering opportunities for meaningful social connections within schools. Limiting SP use in educational settings can help encourage real-world interactions, supporting the development of essential life skills and deeper relationships

### **Parent and Teen Support:**

Schools and governments should be actively discouraging SP and SM use in children. Parents overwhelmingly want SPs banned in schools and many teenagers are now recognising the impact SPs are having on them. A quarter of teenagers surveyed would consider swapping their SP for a basic phone, according to a survey for *BBC Bitesize* and *BBC Radio 5 Live*.

### **Dangers of Big Tech and Addiction**

The pervasive influence of Big Tech on our culture, driven by profit, raises major concerns. Many tech executives strictly limit their own children's screen time, often opting for tech-free schools, highlighting a stark hypocrisy.

Big Tech borrows strategies from Big Tobacco, exploiting human psychological weaknesses to foster addiction. SM platforms, for example, are designed to trigger dopamine responses, keeping users hooked. Some experts call for regulating Big Tech as strictly as Big Tobacco to protect public health. Restricting SP use in schools could help mitigate these negative impacts on children's development and mental well-being.

### **Social Exclusion and Inequality**

Allowing SPs in schools deepens social exclusion for children without access due to financial, cultural, or health reasons. While most children own SPs, those without them face barriers in lessons and peer interactions. This "digital divide" reinforces inequalities, leading to exclusion and long-term issues like low self-esteem and academic disengagement. Schools must adopt inclusive policies that do not rely on SPs use to prevent further marginalisation.

### **Conclusion**

It is essential that all children have access to a SP-free educational environment, where they are free from the pressures and distractions that come with digital devices. The current situation, where decisions about SP use are left to individual schools, fails to address the widespread concerns and evidence regarding their detrimental effects. The rise in bullying and antisocial behavior, often fuelled by unrestricted internet access, cannot be ignored. Without a national policy in place, children continue to be exposed to these risks, and the social pressures to own SPs only grow. Parents are left in the difficult position of providing their children with devices they know may expose them to harm, all to avoid the stigma of being a "have-not." We urge Welsh Government to take decisive action by implementing a national ban on SPs in schools. This would not only create a safer and healthier environment for students but also foster a more equitable and supportive atmosphere where all children can thrive without the pressures of SM and digital distractions.

Thank you

# P-06-1468 Set stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments received by Members of the Senedd

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/9547-12

**Petition Number:** P-06-1468

**Petition title:** Set stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments received by Members of the Senedd

**Text of petition:** There has been wide public concern over large donations given to a prominent Member of Senedd. Lessons must be learnt from this. Wales must preserve and enhance its reputation for transparency and integrity. All Members of Senedd have a duty to ensure that no conflict arises, or appears to arise, between their public duties and their private interests.

Money must not buy, or appear to buy, political influence. There should be due diligence on the source of all benefits received by Members.



# 1. Background

## 1.1. Register and declarations of interests

Section 36 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 on Integrity states that the Senedd's Standing Orders, the rules which set out how the Senedd operates, must provide for a register of Members interests and the register must be made available for public inspection.

Senedd Standing Order 2 relates to the financial and other interests of Members.

Standing Order 2 requires the Presiding Officer to maintain and publish a Register of Interests. Members must complete the register within eight weeks of first taking an oath of office and update the register within four weeks of any changes taking place.

The details of which interests must be registered are set out in an Annex. They include remunerated directorships or employment and gifts, hospitality or material benefits above a value specified in any Senedd resolution. It also requires Members to register 'financial sponsorships'. Financial sponsorships required to be registered include any sponsorships by companies, trade unions, professional bodies, or trade associations to Senedd Members election expenses in excess of 25 per cent of their total election expenses declared. This does not include funding for internal party elections or donations made in general to a local political party which are covered by other requirements.

The Senedd resolved on the 10 May 2006 that any gifts, hospitality, or benefits above £350 must be registered. The Senedd's Standing Orders do not provide a cap on the amounts that Members can receive. The Senedd resolved on 19th May 1999 that "donations are to be regarded as financial sponsorship if such donations in any year are directly linked to a person's candidacy for election to, or membership of, the Senedd and amount to at least £500 in value.

Before taking part in any Senedd proceedings a Member must make an oral declaration of any financial interest that they, a Member's partner or dependent child might have with may impact upon a matter being discussed during those proceedings. This includes where any decisions taken during proceedings could result in a direct financial advantage to the Member or to the Member's knowledge the Member's partner or dependent child. Voting is also prohibited by a Senedd Member who has declared a financial interest in the proceedings.

Section 36 of the Government of Wales Act makes it an offence for Members to take part in proceedings without having complied with, or in contravention of, the rules on registering or declaring interests set out in Standing Orders.

## 1.2. Code of Conduct

All Senedd Members are required to abide by a Code of Conduct. The Code sets out specific rules that Senedd Members must abide by. In addition to overarching rules on not acting in a way that could bring the Senedd or its Members generally into disrepute the Code includes specific rules on financial inducement and conferring an advantage:

- **Rule 10:** Members must not accept any financial inducement, gift, hospitality or other benefit as an incentive or reward for carrying out their functions as a Member of the Senedd, for influencing proceedings in the Senedd, or which might otherwise appear to a reasonable and impartial person to influence, or potentially influence, their actions as a Member, save to the extent that acceptance is in accordance with provision made in Standing Orders.
- **Rule 11:** Members must not use or attempt to use their position as a Member to confer an advantage or preferential treatment for either themselves or any other person, or to avoid disadvantage or create disadvantage for someone else.

The Senedd's Standard's Commissioner is responsible for the investigation of any alleged breaches of the code. The Senedd's Standards of Conduct Committee considers all reports and findings made by the Commissioner and makes recommendations for any actions that should be taken in response to the Commissioner's findings. These can include recommending that the Senedd resolve to exclude a Member for a specified period, withdraw rights and privileges or censure a Member.

### 1.2.a. Guidance on registration and declaration of interests

The Senedd also publishes Guidance for Members on the registration, declaration and recording of financial and other interests. Chapter 5 of the Guidance provides further information on what should be registered.

### 1.2.b. Guidance on Lobbying and access to Member of the Senedd

Guidance on Lobbying and access to Members of the Senedd is also published. It states that Members should not accept any paid work which would involve them lobbying on behalf of any person, organisation or client nor accept any paid work

to provide services as a parliamentary strategist, adviser, or client. The guidance also states that Members should decline all but the most insignificant hospitality, benefit or gift if the Member is aware that it is offered by a professional lobbyist.

### 1.3. Requirements outside of Standing Orders

Senedd Members are also under duties in relation to Senedd election expenses to register donations with the Electoral Commission. Under the current system of Senedd elections, constituency candidates are required to report donations towards their electoral campaign spending to the Electoral Commission under the National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007. Under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 Act, political parties are required to register donations with the Electoral Commission. Donations to regional list candidates must reported to the Electoral Commission as political party rather than individual candidate donations under the PPERA 2000.

The system for electing members to the Senedd will change from 2026 under the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024. The National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007 will be reviewed and amended in light of these electoral changes ahead of the 2026 election.

#### 1.3.c. Senedd competence

The funding of political parties, their members and officers is reserved. There is an exception to this reservation for payments to a political party for the purposes of assisting Members of the Senedd to perform their Senedd duties. Therefore, the regulation of the funding of political parties for Members' party activities is mostly reserved.

## 2. Welsh Government action

Rules related to the registration for gifts, hospitality and payments to Senedd Members are set and governed by the Senedd. However, Welsh Ministers, in their role as members of the Welsh Government are also expected to abide by a code of ethics on ministerial conduct. In relation to gifts and hospitality, paragraph 1.3 vii states:

Ministers must not accept any gift or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise their judgement or them then under an improper obligation.

Paragraph 5.7 of the code on financial interest also states that:

Ministers must scrupulously avoid any danger of an actual or apparent conflict of interest between their Ministerial position and their private financial interests.

The code states that it is for the First Minister to decide how complaints under the code will be investigated but that they will usually refer significant complaints regarding Ministerial conduct to an independent adviser for consideration and advice.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd's Standards of Conduct Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into the registration and declaration of interests. It undertook a public consultation to gather written evidence between March and April 2023. As part of its consultation the Committee asked for views on the interests that should be registered, whether the register and the rules about registering are sufficiently clear, whether the register is sufficiently transparent and in what circumstances should Senedd Members be required to declare an interest. Providing an update on the Committee's work in Plenary on 1 May 2024, the then, Chair of the Committee, Vikky Howells MS said the Committee will bring forward proposals to amend registration requirements in the Seventh Senedd in light of issues identified in the consultation.

In May 2024, the then First Minister, Vaughan Gething MS, wrote to the Chair of the Standards Committee setting out his view that it would be useful if the Committee could undertake work to review Standing Orders and Code of Conduct rules on donations made to Members of the Senedd and in particular, the level of reporting and disclosure and whether there should be a cap on donations from any one entity or individual.

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.

Carolyn Thomas, Chair of the Petitions Committee  
By email

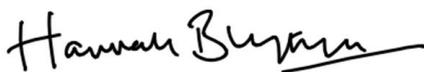
19 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 25 September, which the Standards of Conduct Committee (the Committee) considered at its meeting of 7 October. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. The Committee will consider the issues raised by the petition "P-06-1468 Set stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments received by Members of Senedd" as part of its forward work programme.

This work is likely to take place in the Summer Term, and we will keep you informed of our progress.

Yours,



Hannah Blythyn MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

**P-06-1468 Set stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments received by Members of Senedd - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Thank you for this reminder. As stated in my immediate response, I had missed your email of 6 January, and I am grateful for the extension until tomorrow.

That earlier email invited me to comment on an attached document to be considered along with my petition by the Petitions Committee at its meeting on 20 January. That attached letter of 19 December from Hannah Blythyn MS states that the Standards of Conduct Committee will consider the issues raised by my petition.

As the Standards of Conduct Committee is responsible for reviewing the code of conduct for Members of the Senedd, guidance on the code and complaints procedures, and rules for lobbying, then it would be appropriate for that Committee to consider the issues raised by my petition, and I welcome its intention to do so. Refining the rules for conduct and lobbying is not straightforward, and the details require careful attention.

Stricter rules to limit gifts, donations and payments are required not only to protect the integrity and reputation of the Senedd and its Members. They are also needed to curtail undue influence by those whose wealth can subvert democratic processes. The malign interference of the world's richest man in the political life of the UK and other European countries illustrates the dangers.

I trust both the Petitions Committee and the Standards of Conduct Committee will take account of this wider threat that my petition only partially addresses. Once political debate is determined by the power of money, then democracy will die.

When an election is perceived to have been decided not by the quality of the candidates but by campaign expenditure, its outcome lacks legitimacy, as we have seen. Senedd must tighten its rules in advance of its 2026 election.

Thank you.

Lyn Eynon

# Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate

Petitions Committee | January 2025

Reference: SR24/9547/13

**Petition Number:** P-06-1469

**Petition title:** Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate

**Text of petition:** Any Government policy or project that will cost more than £10 Million should be put to the electorate in the form of referendum to ratify. The abuse of public funds for disastrous pet Government crackpot ideas must stop!

Millions in tax payers funds have been consistently squandered and wasted by the Welsh Government, the disaster that was the M4 relief around Newport, the £35 Million wasted on introducing a 20 MPH speed limit is the latest policy rejected by the electorate but imposed anyway.



# 1. Background

## 1.1. Policy costs

The Welsh Government publishes information on costings in several ways.

The Welsh Government sets out spending plans for policy areas in its annual budgets (more below).

When the Welsh Government introduces new legislation, it often includes estimates of costs in explanatory memoranda.

The Welsh Government also publishes decision reports, which often relate to the allocation of funding. Recent examples of funding in excess of £10 million being allocated include:

- June 2024 – Up to £52.66 million of capital grant funding to help ensure all social sector buildings are made as fire safe as possible;
- June 2024 – £20 million capital funding in 2024 to 2025 to support learners with Additional Learning Needs;
- March 2024 – £11.25 million in capital funding for the Wales Funding Programme, which supports Welsh public sector organisations in pursuing their net-zero goals;
- March 2024 – £70 million for the Optimised Retrofit Programme 2024 to 2025; and
- March 2024 – £39 million through the Bus Network Grant for 2024 to 2025 to local authorities to fund and secure bus services.

## 1.2. Referendums

Section 64 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 states that Welsh Ministers may hold a poll:

...in an area consisting of Wales or any part (or parts) of Wales for the purpose of ascertaining the views of those polled about whether or how any of the functions of the Welsh Ministers (other than that under section 62) should be exercised.

## 2. Welsh Government action

Each year, the Welsh Government must lay a draft budget before the Senedd. The draft budget must set out:

...financing plans, and the amounts of resources and cash which the government proposes to use for the following financial year and provisional amounts for the subsequent two years or for such other period as the Minister considers appropriate.

Following scrutiny by the Senedd (see below), the Welsh Government must lay an Annual Budget Motion, which will provide detail on the final budget. This motion must be approved by the Senedd.

The Welsh Government can make in-year changes to its budget. These are set out in its supplementary budgets and would need to be approved by the Senedd.

The Welsh Government's final budget for 2024-25 sets out how it will use around £27 billion to fund services in Wales. Breakdowns of funds by policy area can be found here.

### 2.1. Response to the petition

In its response to the petition, the Welsh Government said:

A party winning a majority of the seats, or parties able to form a majority or command the confidence of the legislature, have the right to form a government and to seek the implementation of the policies for which they obtained a mandate at the election.

The government is accountable to the legislature for the implementation of their policies, and it is the responsibility of the Senedd to scrutinise their implementation, including their cost-effectiveness and value for money, as well as gathering evidence from experts, and recommending modifications. The legislature is, in turn, accountable to the electorate for their actions...

It also noted that the Welsh Government consults with stakeholders on policies.

On the use of referendums, it said:

Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate

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Whilst referendums may enable public engagement and enhance the democratic process in certain circumstances, they also have significant drawbacks which necessitate caution with their use. We note the analysis and conclusions of the House of Lords Constitution Committee report, Referendums in the United Kingdom. We particularly note the arguments that referendums are not appropriate for settling complex issues and would be costly to administer...we see no reason to depart from the well-established constitutional norms of our representative democracy.

It concluded that:

The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales report highlighted the growing challenges to Welsh democracy, including low levels of public knowledge of and engagement with Wales' democratic institutions. It proposed a set of reforms to strengthen democracy in Wales, including the establishment of an expert panel to help build capacity for democratic innovation and inclusive community engagement, and work is currently progressing on this agenda.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In line with Standing Order 19, a responsible committee (currently the Finance Committee) must:

...consider and report on any report or other document laid before the Senedd by Welsh Ministers or the Commission containing proposals for financing, or the use of resources.

The rules governing how the Finance Committee must undertake its scrutiny are set out in Standing Order 20.

The Senedd and the Welsh Government also agreed a budget protocol for principles underpinning the budget scrutiny process. This protocol sets out that the Finance Committee will:

...undertake its own pre-budget strategy session prior to the autumn. It is expected this will cover longer term strategic scrutiny and public engagement.

Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate

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Under Standing Order 18.2, the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee must:

...consider and report to the Senedd on any use of resources in excess of that authorised or deemed to be authorised that is recorded in the audited accounts of Welsh Ministers, the Commission, or the Ombudsman, recommending whether the Senedd should authorise the excesses retrospectively by supplementary budget resolution.

Audit Wales also has a role in scrutinising how public money is spent. Some of the Auditor General For Wales's reports are considered by the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee.

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  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros  
Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate  
Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1469  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/10411/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

22 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

**Petition P-06-1469 Any Government policy or project that costs more than £10 Million must be voted in by the electorate**

Thank you for your letter of 27 September regarding the above petition.

In a representative democracy such as ours, it is a well-established and accepted constitutional principle that political parties seek election and a mandate for their policies through the publication of election manifestos in advance of the election. A party winning a majority of the seats, or parties able to form a majority or command the confidence of the legislature, have the right to form a government and to seek the implementation of the policies for which they obtained a mandate at the election.

The government is accountable to the legislature for the implementation of their policies, and it is the responsibility of the Senedd to scrutinise their implementation, including their cost-effectiveness and value for money, as well as gathering evidence from experts, and recommending modifications. The legislature is, in turn, accountable to the electorate for their actions.

Whilst the petition is about the merits of holding referendums on government policies, rather than the specific examples it cites, it is worth considering the example of 20 mph speed limits.

It was clear there was a growing consensus on safe speeds in communities that we could build from. We still believe that 20mph is right, but we want to make sure we are getting the right speeds on the right roads.

Between April and August 2024, Ken Skates MS, Cabinet Secretary met and listened to citizens, bus drivers, emergency services, the police, young people, vulnerable people, businesses, county, town and community councillors, local authorities and many others – to understand their views on road safety in residential areas.

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

**Back Page 74**  
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.

In July 2024, we gave highway authorities revised guidance to make it clearer where roads can be 30mph. In 2024, the public has had a chance to suggest where they feel changes should be made.

Highway authorities are now using our revised guidance to assess these suggestions.

Any change in speed limits will need to be made through a traffic regulation order. This process will take several months to complete.

Our response to feedback from members of the public and their elected representatives demonstrates how representative democracy should work and has worked.

Whilst referendums may enable public engagement and enhance the democratic process in certain circumstances, they also have significant drawbacks which necessitate caution with their use. We note the analysis and conclusions of the House of Lords Constitution Committee report, Referendums in the United Kingdom. We particularly note the arguments that referendums are not appropriate for settling complex issues and would be costly to administer. It is worth noting the costs of administering the last Senedd election came to £3,991,289.18 (this does not include the Covid related costs). The costs of holding multiple referendums during the course of a Senedd's term would incur significant expenditure. We also note the argument that referendums could undermine representative democracy.

For these reasons, whilst referendums can be used for consulting the public on issues of particular significance, we see no reason to depart from the well-established constitutional norms of our representative democracy.

There are, in our view, more appropriate ways we can improve our engagement with the public on the implementation of government policy. The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales report highlighted the growing challenges to Welsh democracy, including low levels of public knowledge of and engagement with Wales' democratic institutions. It proposed a set of reforms to strengthen democracy in Wales, including the establishment of an expert panel to help build capacity for democratic innovation and inclusive community engagement, and work is currently progressing on this agenda.

Yours sincerely,



**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

## P-06-1470 Scrap the Racist and ridiculous Anti-Racist Wales Plan

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/9547-14

**Petition Number:** P-06-1470

**Petition title:** Scrap the Racist and ridiculous Anti-Racist Wales Plan

**Text of petition:** Did you know that in 2020/21 the Welsh Gov consulted on a Draft Race Equality Action Plan? Renamed the Anti-Racist Wales Plan? No? ONLY 500 people responded to this consultation in total. This “Plan” is to change government policies in order to meet “Equity” quotas. Not equality. I believe this is discriminatory and racist and based on Critical Race THEORY. And anecdotal personal experiences. Not fact. It warns of the “consequences of a colour-blind approach”. This needs to be scrapped immediately.

They say: “From our community engagement, and the responses to our consultation, it became clear that an anti-racist approach was needed”.

In my view, this advocates discrimination and racism and is a waste of our funds and will have impacts on the whole of Wales. The introduction of ARWP warns “Frequently, the assumption is made that ‘providing the same for everyone’ will be the most appropriate service. Whereas in fact, taking people’s differences leads to a more sensitive, accessible and effective service. Often the consequence of the colour-blind approach is that ethnic minority people struggle to enter jobs, or to progress, or to receive services appropriate to their needs.”



“For us, anti-racism involves actively identifying and getting rid of policies, systems, structures and processes that produce radically different outcomes for ethnic minority groups.”

This is disgusting and needs to be scrapped.

<https://www.gov.wales/introduction-anti-racist-wales-html>

## 1. Background

In early 2020, the Welsh Government started work on an action plan for race equality, following calls by the Wales Race Forum, and other grassroots organisations. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, the worldwide condemnation of the murder of George Floyd, and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement shone a light on the entrenched inequalities faced by ethnic minority communities and accelerated the work to develop an action plan.

The First Minister Mark Drakeford set up a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 Advisory Group to examine the impact of the pandemic. Taking forward its recommendations a steering group was set-up to develop a Race Equality Plan for Wales, chaired by Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna and the Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government.

The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) was published in June 2022. The plan aims to “make a measurable change to the lives of ethnic minority people by tackling racism”.

The Welsh Government has since published a progress report in December 2023 and an updated plan in November 2024.

### 1.1. The consultation

Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice to the Petitions Committee on 13 December 2024 questions the petitioners claim that only 500 people responded to the consultation and states that:

In reality, the response was far more extensive, drawing on evidence and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including public and third sector organisations, community groups, and individuals who have directly experienced the impact of racism.

A draft Race Equality Action Plan was published in March 2021. The draft plan included actions and goals across 13 policy areas plus a number of cross cutting goals. Announcing the publication of the Plan, the then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS said:

There are other distinguishing features within this plan that set it apart from other plans of this nature. The principle of co-creation has been fundamental to the development of the race equality action plan. The content of the plan is grounded in the lived experience of black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales. Around 2,000 individuals have shared their views on what the plan should include and the plan would not have been possible without their contributions.

A consultation on the draft action plan ended in July 2021 and received 330 responses from more than 1,992 individuals in total. The Welsh Government published an analysis of 255 out of the 330 responses, explaining that “66 responses have been categorised as responses that either contained racist / offensive comments or focused on issues not related to the content of this consultation”. Key themes are identified on pages 6-7, it states that:

Around 90 per cent of responses supported the ambition of the Plan set out in its vision, purpose, values. However, 89 per cent of responses expressed reservations about whether the Plan, as consulted on, would succeed in delivering that vision. A range of factors were cited in support of these reservations. These included: the size of the Plan; missing actions; inadequate or no reference to monitoring, evaluation and lack of accountability.

In the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice to the Petitions Committee, she states that the plan does not lead to discrimination against the majority population, but rather “it aims to create a fairer and more inclusive Wales, where everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, has equal opportunities”. By addressing racial inequalities, she states this will make communities more resilient and provide “everyone with the chance to contribute and succeed”, and:

The ArWAP is a necessary, evidence-based plan designed to address systemic inequality and create a fairer Wales for all. The misconceptions in the petition do not reflect the true vision, purpose and values of ArWAP. The Welsh Government remains committed to promoting equality and fairness for all people in Wales and will continue to engage with communities to ensure the plan reflects their experiences and needs.

## 2. Welsh Parliament action

In October 2020, the Senedd expressed its support for the “need for a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales to address structural and systemic inequality, and advance opportunity for black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales”.

Between March 2023 and February 2024, the Equality and Social Justice Committee held an inquiry into the implementation of the ArWAP. The Committee concluded that further work is needed if the Welsh Government is to achieve its vision of an anti-racist Wales. Organisations who shared their views with the Committee endorsed the Plan’s vision and comprehensive scope. However, most raised concerns about the implementation and rate of progress.

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.

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y  
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1470  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/10227/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

13 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter regarding petition P-06-1470, which calls for the scrapping of the Anti-racist Wales Action (ArWAP). I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised and highlighting the essential role of the ArWAP in creating a more cohesive and welcoming Wales.

The petition claims that only 500 people responded to the consultation. In reality, the response was far more extensive, drawing on evidence and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including public and third sector organisations, community groups, and individuals who have directly experienced the impact of racism.

The petition suggests that ArWAP could negatively affect the wider community or lead to discrimination against the majority population. On the contrary, the plan aims to create a fairer and more inclusive Wales, where everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, has equal opportunities. The reference to "moving beyond a colour-blind approach" highlights the importance of recognising that treating everyone the same can sometimes overlook the unique challenges faced by ethnic minority people. By tailoring services and policies to meet diverse needs, we aim to improve outcomes for all.

Addressing racial inequality strengthens our communities, making them more resilient and providing everyone with the chance to contribute and succeed. The ArWAP includes measures to combat all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, ensuring that no community is left behind and that every person in Wales can live in a society free from prejudice.

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

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 ArWAP is a necessary, evidence-based plan designed to address systemic inequality and create a fairer Wales for all. The misconceptions in the petition do not reflect the true vision, purpose and values of ArWAP. The Welsh Government remains committed to promoting equality and fairness for all people in Wales and will continue to engage with communities to ensure the plan reflects their experiences and needs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first name.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

## A new Senedd Act to Recall Local Government Councillors

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/9617/4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1477

**Petition title:** A new Senedd Act to Recall Local Government Councillors

**Text of petition:** As it stands there is no mechanism for constituents to remove a sitting local Councillor other than at the next election, which are every five years. There needs to be an Act similar to Recall of MPs but this time Recall of Councillors.

I believe it is only fair that we treat and deal with Local Councillors in the same way as Members of Parliament. If they are not doing their job they should be removed and replaced with someone who will carry out the wishes of the people who voted them in.



# 1. Background

## 1.1. Recall mechanisms

Recall mechanisms – the means by which an elected politician can be removed from office by their constituents between elections – are a relatively rare practice in democratic institutions. The UK Parliament was the first legislature in the UK to introduce a system of recall through the [Recall of MPs Act 2015](#) for Members of the House of Commons.

The Senedd’s Standards of Conduct Committee is currently [gathering evidence](#) on whether a recall mechanism should be introduced for Members of the Senedd through its inquiry into Individual Member Accountability.

## 1.2. Westminster system

The [Recall of MPs Act 2015](#) provided a system of recall for Members of the House of Commons for the first time.

A recall petition against a sitting MP can only be opened if one of three conditions are met:

- The MP has, after becoming an MP, been convicted of an offence and sentenced to be imprisoned or detained for a period of less than 12 months (including suspended sentences).<sup>1</sup>
- Following a report from the Committee on Standards, the House of Commons orders the suspension of the MP from the house for at least 10 sitting days (or 14 calendar days).
- The MP has, after becoming an MP, been convicted of providing false or misleading information in support of an expenses claim under section 10 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009.

For a petition to succeed, it must be signed by 10% of eligible registered electors on the parliamentary register in that constituency.

More information on the recall of MPs can be found in this [House of Commons Library briefing](#).

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<sup>1</sup> If a sitting MP convicted of an offence receives a custodial sentence of more than a year and is detained, they would already automatically lose their seat and recall does not apply.

### 1.3. Accountability of Councillors

While there is no recall mechanism for councillors in Wales, there are a number of other accountability measures already in place.

The Local Government Act 2000 provides for the publication of a set of principles to govern the conduct of councillors and of a model Code of Conduct.

The Conduct of Members (Principles) (Wales) Order 2001 sets out these principles:

Selflessness	Objectivity in Decision-making
Honesty	Equality and Respect
Integrity and Propriety	Openness
Duty to Uphold the Law	Accountability
Stewardship	Leadership

These principles set the ethical framework for how councillors should act in their roles. Each local authority is also required to have a Code of Conduct for members based on a national Model. The current Model Code of Conduct is set out in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008.

Members of the public can complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) if they believe that a councillor has breached their Code of Conduct. The PSOW will assess the case and decide whether or not to investigate the complaint. If they determine that the councillor did something wrong and that further action is needed, they can refer their report to the Standards Committee of the relevant local authority or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

The Adjudication Panel for Wales is an independent tribunal that decides on whether councillors (and members of other public authorities) have broken their Code of Conduct. It takes on references from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and considers appeals against decisions made by authorities' Standards Committees. The decisions made by the Panel are published on its website.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 inserts new provisions into the Local Government Act 2000 placing an additional duty on the leaders of political groups within the 22 local authorities in Wales. Leaders of a political groups must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group. It also requires them to co-operate with the council's Standards Committee.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In 2021, the then Minister for Housing and Local Government commissioned an independent review of the ethical standards framework for local government in Wales that was established by the Local Government Act 2000.

The review, conducted by Richard Penn, was published in July 2021. It concluded that the “overwhelming consensus” is that the current framework is ‘fit for purpose’, works well in practice and is viewed by many as “far superior to that currently used in English local government”.

However, it recommended a number of minor adjustments to the Model Code of Conduct, including to specify a threshold beyond which gifts or hospitality must be declared, to formalise guidance on the use of social media and to oblige members to report their own criminal conduct. The review also recommended that there should be mandatory training on the Code of Conduct for all members of principal and community councils and to extend the powers of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Welsh Government published its response for consultation in 2023.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd’s Standards of Conduct Committee is currently considering the issue of recall for Members of the Senedd as part of its inquiry into Individual Member Accountability. This follows a commitment from the Welsh Government to work to see legislation introduced before the 2026 election to establish a system of recall for 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.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1477  
Ein cyf/Our ref JB/10236/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

02 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1477 A new Senedd Act to Recall Local Government Councillors.

Councillors in Wales are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct to maintain public trust and confidence. They should act with integrity, honesty, and transparency, ensuring their actions are always in the best interest of the community. This includes adhering to the Code of Conduct, which outlines principles such as selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. Councillors should also avoid conflicts of interest and ensure they do not use their position for personal gain. Effective communication, respect for others, and a commitment to equality and diversity are also crucial aspects of their role.

When a councillor's behaviour falls short of these standards, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales investigates complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct. If a breach is found, actions such as training, mediation, or in severe cases, suspension or disqualification from office can be implemented.

Councils have their own standards committees that are expected to pro-actively promote and report on maintaining high standards of conduct. The Committees are chaired by and include lay members to ensure the Committees have a suitable level of independence from the council. These measures help maintain the integrity of local government.

There is also an extensive legislative framework relating to the disqualification of membership from local government. This includes disqualification for those in office found guilty of serious criminal offences.

The issue of elected members behaviour was discussed as part of recent debates during the passage of both the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 and the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024.

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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.

In the case of the Senedd, in light of the wider context of reform, a commitment was made to introduce a recall regime. However, as set out above, local government already has a robust ethical framework. This was recently the subject of an independent review which found no serious causes for concern. This is not therefore a matter that has recently been the subject of detailed discussion with local government or a wider consultation with the public. Taking this forward would need consideration of what mechanisms could be put in place which would work with this framework and the existing scheme of disqualification.

It is important to note that any changes in this area would require primary legislation. I look forward to hearing the views of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

**P-06-1477: Advocating for a Recall Mechanism for Local Government Councillors, Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Dear Petitions Committee,

I am writing to provide further context and support for Petition P-06-1477, which calls for the introduction of a Senedd Act to establish a recall mechanism for local government councillors in Wales. The petition garnered 686 signatures from constituents across all Welsh constituencies within a notably short timeframe, underscoring the widespread public support for this initiative.

Currently, the mechanisms in place to address councillor misconduct or neglect are limited to breaches of the Code of Conduct or the commission of serious criminal offences. While these safeguards are essential, they do not encompass situations where councillors neglect their public duties without overtly violating the Code or engaging in criminal activity.

For instance, the Local Government Act 1972 mandates that councillors must attend at least one meeting within a six-month period—the so-called “six-month rule.” However, this requirement can be circumvented by councillors who attend a single meeting just before the six-month deadline, thereby resetting the attendance clock without genuinely engaging in their duties. Such practices enable councillors to receive allowances while minimally participating in council activities and neglecting constituent communications throughout their term.

Moreover, there are instances where councillors fail to engage with their constituents throughout their entire elected term. This lack of engagement undermines the principles of representation and accountability that are fundamental to local governance.

The absence of a recall mechanism means that constituents have no recourse to address such neglect until the next election cycle, which occurs every five years. This lack of accountability can lead to diminished public trust in local governance and a sense of disenfranchisement among voters.

Implementing a recall mechanism for local government councillors would align their accountability measures with those already in place for Members of Parliament, as established by the Recall of MPs Act. This would empower constituents to take action when a councillor fails to fulfill their duties, ensuring that elected officials remain responsive and responsible to the communities they serve.

I urge the committee to consider the merits of this petition and the potential benefits of introducing a recall mechanism to enhance the integrity and accountability of local government in Wales.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely, Russell Spencer-Downe

# P-06-1483 Give neighbours their say when holiday let owners start applying for licences

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/10372-7

Petition Number: P-06-1483

Petition title: Give neighbours their say when holiday let owners start applying for licences

## Text of petition:

There are thousands of holiday lets in Wales. This means that many of us have suddenly found ourselves living near businesses instead of homes, and we've had no say in the matter.

The holiday let licensing scheme in Scotland allows neighbours to respond to licence applications: the neighbours' responses may then be considered as potential grounds for refusing an application.

We want Welsh Government to include neighbour consultation in Wales' holiday let licensing scheme too.

## Additional information:

As well as holiday let providers being able to demonstrate compliance with safety and quality requirements, we believe the licensing scheme in Wales should also address the issues faced by neighbours.



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Legislation for a holiday let licensing scheme in Wales is expected to be introduced to the Senedd before the end of 2024, and we want Welsh Government to adopt The Scottish Government’s licensing scheme where:

1. neighbours are notified of new licence applications/renewals;
2. neighbours are allowed to raise objections/concerns in response to a licence application;
3. neighbour objections are considered as potential grounds for refusing a licence application.

## 1. Background

The Welsh Government’s [Programme for Government](#) and the [Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru](#) both included a commitment to introduce a statutory licensing scheme for holiday lets in Wales. Despite the ending of the Co-operation Agreement, the Welsh Government still intends to take this forward.

## 2. Licensing of short-term lets in Scotland

The Scottish Parliament approved the *Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short-term Lets) Order 2022* (“the Licensing Order”) in January 2022. This required all Scottish local authorities to introduce a licensing system for short-term lets within their area by 1 October 2022.

The [policy note](#) which accompanies the Licensing Order states:

The Scottish Government’s purpose in the regulation of short-term lets is to ensure that local authorities have appropriate regulatory powers to balance the needs and concerns of their communities with wider economic and tourism interests.

The Licensing Order establishes a licensing scheme to ensure short-term lets are safe and address issues faced by neighbours; and to facilitate local authorities in knowing and understanding what is happening in their area as well as to assist with handling complaints effectively.

[Guidance produced by the Scottish Government](#) sets out that applicants have responsibility for giving notice of an application for a new, or renewal of a, short-

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term lets licence. Applicants are required to display a site notice for 21 days at or near the premises so that it can be conveniently read by the public. The site notice must set out that an application has been made for a licence, the main facts of the application, and explain how objections and representations in relation to the application may be made to the licensing authority.

### 3. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's proposal is to introduce new legislation to make it a requirement for visitor accommodation providers to obtain a licence to operate, which it suggests would help raise standards across the industry, ensure visitor safety and provide a level playing field for all operators.

The Welsh Government launched a public consultation on the proposals in December 2022, seeking views on the different ways that a licensing scheme might operate. The consultation document did not include any reference to allowing members of the public to raise objections as part of the licence application process.

The Welsh Government's response to the petition highlights that local authorities have the power to "introduce what is known as an Article 4 Direction to manage the use of housing as second homes and holiday lets, where they are concerned about the impact on their communities". The response states further:

Local authorities are best placed to assess the local impact of new holiday lets in residential properties and consider what steps are needed to protect the interests of their communities. As a result, we are not proposing to include community or resident consultation as part of a national licensing process. Local authorities already have powers to introduce planning controls to deal with these issues, particularly where there is significant local concern.

In September 2024, Gwynedd Council became the first local planning authority in Wales to implement an Article 4 Direction, which requires property owners to obtain planning permission before changing the use of a main residence into a second home or holiday accommodation.

The Eryri National Park Authority has also served notice that it is proposing to make a similar Article 4 Direction, which would come into effect on 1 June 2025.

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Regarding the timing of the proposed legislation on the licensing of visitor accommodation providers, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language stated in December 2024, “we are working on the basis that it will be a Bill introduced in 2025”.

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-06-1483  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/10340/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

19 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter.

Our Programme for Government and our Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru both set out our commitment to introduce a statutory licensing scheme for holiday lets as part of a package of measures to address the negative impact that high proportions of second homes and short-term holiday lets can have on communities. Despite the ending of the Co-operation Agreement, we remain committed to implementing regulation for visitor accommodation.

The Welsh Government recognises concerns about the impact that some short-term holiday lets can have on housing stock in communities and anecdotal evidence of inconsistent compliance with, or understanding of, legal requirements. We have already put measures in place to help local authorities manage the impact holiday lets and second homes can have in residential areas. These include the use of council tax premiums for second homes and empty homes, and the introduction of a new planning use class to distinguish between primary residences, second homes and holiday lets.

These amendments to planning legislation mean that a Local Planning Authority can introduce what is known as an Article 4 Direction to manage the use of housing as second homes and holiday lets, where they are concerned about the impact on their communities. After undertaking the necessary steps, the Article 4 Direction enables Local Planning Authorities to require property owners to obtain planning permission before changing the use of their properties into second homes or short-term holiday lets.

Local authorities are best placed to assess the local impact of new holiday lets in residential properties and consider what steps are needed to protect the interests of their communities. As a result, we are not proposing to include community or resident consultation as part of a national licensing process. Local authorities already have powers to introduce planning

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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.

controls to deal with these issues, particularly where there is significant local concern. Involving a national licensing authority to do the same thing would result in a less clear and effective process for residents and accommodation providers. Local authorities already have powers to support residents with noise complaints and general nuisance.

Instead, we are proposing that a national licensing scheme will build upon these measures and enable visitor accommodation providers to demonstrate they are meeting certain conditions before they can use their accommodation for visitors.

We want to show visitors to Wales that operators take their obligations seriously in providing safe visitor accommodation - standards that many in the sector will already be complying with.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio

**Fy cyf/My ref: P-06-1483**

**Eich cyf/Your ref: RE/10340/24**

The demands of people exploiting the housing market are being prioritised over the rights of residents in Wales: local communities are bearing all the costs and reaping none of the rewards. Long-term tenants have been evicted from their rented homes making way for more holiday lets as landlords take advantage of the more lucrative short-term holiday letting business, contrary to Welsh Government's ambitions for sustainable tourism

Residents in Wales are being penalised by inflated housing prices, causing disintegrating communities where the Welsh language is being decimated, with a gig economy job market: all contrary to Welsh Government's ambitions for sustainable tourism; all being the polar opposite of the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Thank you for now giving me the opportunity to respond to Rebecca Evans MS' document ref. RE/10340/24.

### **Pg. 2: Council tax premiums for second homes**

Not all second homes pay the council tax premium (where applicable): local authorities also rely on information sent to them by members of the public, so some properties may not be recorded as second homes by the local authority. Only when a short-term visitor register is introduced in Wales will local authorities know the exact number of second homes in their areas.

Unfortunately, there are a number of "loopholes" associated with the council tax premium system:

- a. some second home owners in Wales have registered their properties as primary residences in order to avoid paying the premium;
- b. second home owners are exempt from paying the premium for one year if the property is being marketed for sale. This "rule" allows holiday let owners to continue operating their businesses and generating rental income while being exempt from paying the premium: there is no requirement for the owner to sell during/at the end of that one year period. Shouldn't this "loophole" be closed i.e. shouldn't the exemption only be applicable to properties that are not being used while being marketed for sale?
- c. commonly referred to as the "council tax loophole", the "rule" whereby residential properties are allowed to switch from paying council tax to paying business rates. The Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022 states that a minimum annual occupancy of being let commercially for 182 days has to be reached in order for a holiday let to switch over to the business rates register: the Valuation Office Agency is responsible for ensuring that properties comply with this 182 days per year "rule". The VOA is also responsible for calculating the rateable value of holiday let properties. The VOA uses the number of beds in a holiday let to calculate the rateable value rather than rental income: this results in nearly all short-term holiday lets being assigned with rateable values <£6000. Businesses with rateable values <£6000 in Wales receive 100%

Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) i.e. they don't pay any taxes...no council tax nor business rates.

I sent FOI requests to the local authorities and discovered that more than 10,000 short-term holiday lets in Wales are not paying any taxes: I calculated that this equates to a loss in revenue of nearly £48 million per year. Most scandalously, because holiday lets were entitled to SBRR, many holiday let owners were also entitled to receive the £10,000 Covid-19 grant payment as well. I'm sure most taxpayers in Wales would be appalled to discover how much money has been handed over to holiday let owners. SBRR has clearly been a major incentive for property investors to set-up holiday lets in Wales: a google search of "how do I avoid paying council tax on my holiday let" will confirm this.

Checking more than 10000 holiday lets annually to ensure compliance with the 182 day "rule" is a large task, and any member of staff undertaking this work is doing it free of charge (because the holiday lets being checked aren't paying any taxes). I asked the VOA to confirm how and when they checked compliance. The written response I received stated "these checks are carried out every 2 years" which means that the 182 day threshold set in The Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022 isn't fit for purpose because the holiday lets aren't being checked annually i.e. it is likely that many holiday lets will remain on the business rates register even when they're not reaching the annual 182 day threshold.

Is it time for Welsh Government to re-visit this? Should Welsh Government distinguish between properties that are given specific planning permission for holiday lets with restricted occupancy (e.g. holiday lets on farms; holiday lets in commercial properties) and those properties that would otherwise be used, or have been used, as homes?

I believe another option, **Option 4**, should have been included in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022 (dated 24 May 2022). Option 4 would classify all holiday lets given specific planning permission and those in commercial properties as non-domestic whereas all holiday lets using residential properties (i.e. holiday lets that are/would be marketed and sold as residential properties) would be classified as domestic and returned to the council tax register. Returning properties in Option 4 to the council tax register wouldn't be costly: there will already be historic records of the council tax band for each property (as shown in Table 1) of the Explanatory Memorandum. However, the real benefit of Option 4 would be the money generated (see my calculated loss in revenue of £48 million) when holiday let owners start paying taxes like everyone else.

What does Welsh Government think of this proposal? The extra money could be used to set up the new holiday let licensing scheme, with neighbour consultation included in the scheme.

### **Pg. 2: New planning use class for holiday lets (C6)**

The new planning class for holiday lets, C6, is effectively describing a short-term house of multiple occupation (HMO). Unlike planning classes C3 and C5, holiday let class C6 sets no limit on the number of people, thus allowing a large number of unrelated people to use a

holiday let. If the holiday let happens to be in a terraced street (as many are), then a large number of guests staying during the working week is likely to cause problems for neighbouring residents.

### **Pg. 3: Article 4 Direction**

To date, only Gwynedd planning authority has introduced an Article 4 Direction. Indeed from the moment Gwynedd Council announced its intention to introduce Article 4 up until the date it was implemented, the number of holiday let numbers increased because people wanted to change residential houses to holiday lets before the new planning rules kicked in. Obviously, neighbour consultation will take part when any new planning application to convert a house into a holiday let takes place in Gwynedd now, but Article 4 is not retrospective so all the holiday lets already in operation (in excess of 6000 holiday lets in Gwynedd) will have been set up without any planning permission/neighbour consultation.

Anyone living outside Gwynedd's planning authority is currently able to convert a house to a holiday let without planning permission and without consulting neighbouring properties. Setting up Article 4 is a costly and time-consuming process: many local authorities have decided not to implement it due to budgetary constraints. The problems associated with converting houses to holiday lets is well documented (I have identified some of these problems at the start of this document), so my question is: if the permitted development rights identified in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2022, whereby a dwellinghouse can change to a holiday let without the need for planning permission, is causing so many problems, why can't the development rights be removed? Then, no local authority would need to introduce an Article 4 Direction.

### **Pg. 4: Local authorities supporting residents living next door to holiday lets**

When I bought my mid-terraced house 9 years ago, there were 5 long-term tenants living next door in a house that had been converted to 3 flats. When the property was sold a couple of years ago the 3 flats became short-term holiday lets: there is now capacity for 11-12 people (and their dogs). There is intensified use at the property. I estimate there have been around 200 changeovers in the last year: the 3 flats are busy. The use of the 3 flats as holiday lets has ruined the enjoyment of my home; the new owners also put up a metal external spiral staircase (without planning permission...but the planning dept. let that go): the stairs are noisy, and there's a lot of traffic. My husband wants to move as he's fed-up with the constant disruption, and disturbed sleep. We don't use the garden any more: it's now a public space overlooked by hundreds of strangers who wouldn't have previously have been able to access the space. The list of problems I've experienced is too lengthy to write here, but I've written to the local authority many times. Dealing with all the disturbance has affected my wellbeing and has been stressful. The latest response I've had from the council states: "Fe eglurwyd i Ms Cullimore nad oedd natur y materion sŵn oedd yn ei godi, yn anffodus, yn gyfystyr i dystiolaeth o niwsans statudol. Felly ni fyddai'r gwasanaeth yn gallu gweithredu yn ffurfiol. Fe roddodd y swyddog eglurhad i'r cwynydd o'r math o sŵn y byddai yn bosib gweithredu arno fel niwsans statudol, er enghraifft sŵn cerddoriaeth uchel yn digwydd yn gyson ayyb."

The council are not able to help or support me: the noise & nuisance complaints procedure cannot be used effectively to protect domestic properties from holiday lets. Holiday let users are not neighbours: some are considerate and quiet (very few); most are noisy and rude. But it's changing all the time. The complaints system is geared around long-term neighbours not a merry-go-round of visitors. There is a culture of dismissal from government departments and councils: organisations are under-resourced (I believe there are 2 planning officers in Gwynedd?). I am also very familiar with receiving "standard responses" (much like the ones in document ref. RE/10340/24). Do I want limits on numbers of guests? Yes. Do I want quiet times written into a holiday let licence? Yes. Do I think 3 holiday lets constitutes a statutory nuisance where groups of people are moving in and out of the property next door 200 times in a year? Absolutely. The new licensing scheme surely just can't allow every holiday let owner to be granted a licence without addressing the impact on neighbouring properties? However, I would be interested to hear of any cases where local authorities have successfully prosecuted holiday let owners for having a negative effect on local residents if Ms Evans has any information to share: it would certainly help my case.

My petition is not anti-tourist: it's about having visitor accommodation in the right places. When I've stayed in visitor accommodation abroad there have been rules to observe quiet times and limits on numbers of guests: these are very reasonable "rules". Surely Welsh Government aren't just only interested in ensuring the safety of visitors and ignoring the wellbeing of residents? A pressure group in Wales received an anonymous letter of complaint last year from members of the hotel and guesthouse sector: the members were complaining that short-term lets are having a negative effect on their businesses. Welsh Government wants to provide safe accommodation for visitors to Wales. I believe that Welsh Government needs to first show that they are taking the concerns of residents in Wales seriously, and include neighbour consultation as part of the new short-term licensing scheme: more than 2000 signatories on my petition agree with me.

An article in The Guardian dated 19 March 2024 states that 1 in every 21 adults in the UK is a landlord. How many Senedd Cymru members, for example, own short-term holiday lets themselves or have partners/spouses/family members/friends who own holiday lets? Is it possible for policy decisions involving the holiday let industry to be made objectively? Are policy decisions made with the best interests at heart for the 20 in every 21 adults who are not landlords?

The new licensing scheme shouldn't create another situation whereby permanent residents have less rights than absent landlords and visiting tourists.

A response I had from one Welsh Government department stated that "visitors to Wales provide an important economic benefit to the country but this should not be detrimental to existing residents and communities." I'm hoping this isn't just another standard response.

Yours sincerely,

J Cullimore

# Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover; make safe for bus users and reduce the speed limit.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR24/10067-1

Petition Number: P-06-1487

**Petition title:** Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover; make safe for bus users and reduce the speed limit.

**Text of petition:** The busy A4042 runs directly through the heritage village of Llanover. Residents and visitors need to cross the road to use the bus service, access the amenity of the Mon and Brecon Canal and visit the renown Llanover Gardens which open to the public at intervals through the year. The speed limit is currently 40mph. Residents of all ages do not feel safe to use the bus service. The village attracts visitors at all times of the year. The bus stops are located near to the garden entrance.

Llanover is a Monmouthshire village steeped in Welsh history. The character of this village can be envisaged through its street scene. The road that goes through it is winding. The buildings themselves are characterised by the walls that bound them. Each building is unique. Llanover House and gardens is also bounded by stone walls.

SWTRA have recognised the danger in this twisty road that is bounded on both sides by stone walls and have double white lined the carriageways to discourage overtaking.



The speed limit remains at 40 mph. The bus stops are located near the gates to Llanover gardens. Traffic enters the village from the south where the National Speed limit applies - often without slowing sufficiently. The speed limit changes down to 40mph only c.100 metres from the bus stops. This is where a crossing is most needed and would be the logical location. Large lorries and tractors pass through the village. The walls have a funnelling effect and the backdraft is significant.

## 1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the A4042 trunk road in south Wales. The South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) has responsibility for the day to day operation and maintenance of the road.

The petitioner says that SWRTA has “recognised the danger” on this “twisty road bounded on both sides by stone walls” on the A4042 through Llanover. The petitioner also highlights that pedestrians are required to cross the road to access the local bus stop and that the speed limit only reduces from the national speed limit a short distance from the bus stop.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 5 December 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS says “road safety is a priority for the Welsh Government”.

He states an initial meeting has been arranged to discuss the concerns raised, after which he will be in a better position to comment.

### 2.1. Road safety

The Welsh Government published its Road Safety Framework in 2013 which set three targets to improve road safety so that by 2020, compared to the baseline average for 2004-2008, there would be:

- 40% fewer people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads;
- 25% fewer motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads; and

Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover; make safe for bus users and reduce the speed limit.

- 
- 40% fewer young people (aged 16-24) killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads.

The road safety framework was reviewed in 2018. The current National Transport Delivery Plan commits to:

... review our road safety framework to support our Vision Zero approach to road safety, based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on roads. This will support the delivery of our legal obligations on accessibility and safety as a highways authority and complement our work on active travel, road space reallocation and speed limits.

The timescale for the update is given as “2022 to 2024” and a Welsh Government consultation on the new strategy closed on 31 January 2024. In November 2024, the Cabinet Secretary told the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee that publication of a new strategy had been delayed as:

...we're also in discussions with the UK Government over their proposals for a road safety strategy for England. So, we want to make sure that we have consistency across the border wherever possible when it comes to road safety, so those discussions are ongoing at this moment in time.

## 2.2. Speed limits

The Welsh Government is currently updating its 2009 guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales in light of its 20mph speed limit policy as well as other policies such as Net Zero Wales and the Wales Transport Strategy.

In a paper provided to the CCEI Committee in November 2024, the Cabinet Secretary referred to a review of speed limits on the trunk road network that is underway. He also told the Committee:

...we're also looking at the possibility of having buffer speed limits...there are some sections where you can travel at the national speed limit and then you immediately enter 20 mph. So, we're looking at whether buffer speed limits should be incorporated.

However this review relates to roads where the speed limit is either 20mph or 30mph and therefore does not appear to include this section of the A4042.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

While the Committee has previously considered petitions relating to other sections of the A4042, concerns regarding this specific location do not appear to have been raised in the Senedd to date.

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.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1487  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/10758/24

Petitions Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
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[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

5 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November regarding petition P-06-1487 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover.

I can assure you road safety is a priority for the Welsh Government. We have also received representation from Peter Fox MS and Catherine Fookes MP. I have therefore asked my officials to arrange an initial meeting to open discussions regarding the concerns raised.

Once this meeting has taken place, I will be in a better position to comment in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

**Ken Skates AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

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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-06-1487 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 Llanover make safe for bus users and reduce the speed limit - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 14 January 2025**

Thank you,

Please refer to my original comments.

Residents continue to experience difficulties crossing the road to access bus services. Traffic persists in speeding through the village.

However, I have started to observe some traffic slowing down to 20 mph as they notice street lighting and housing and presume the default speed limit applies.

Kind regards,

Jan

# Diagnosis and treatment for people suffering from adverse Covid-19 vaccine side effects

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR2510372-5

Petition Number: P-06-1493

Petition title: Ensure diagnosis and treatment for people suffering from adverse Covid-19 vaccine side effects

**Text of petition:** I suffer from Covid-19 Vaccine Adverse Reaction. As a result, my life has changed beyond recognition. I struggle to do basic tasks, in constant pain and have become dependent on my family to care for me. In my experience, many health professionals do not acknowledge the symptoms and suffering caused by vaccine injury. I call for better awareness and an appropriate pathway for diagnosis and treatment for those experiencing such debilitating side effects.

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.



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## Background

While [the World Health Organisation states](#) that Covid-19 vaccines are safe and effective, they do recognise that side effects can occur. They highlight that most of these are mild and temporary, but serious adverse events are rare.

The UK Government's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) ensures all vaccines used in the UK meet the required safety, quality, and efficacy standards, continuously analysing data to ensure their ongoing safety. The MHRA also operates the [Yellow Card scheme](#), where healthcare professionals and the public can report suspected side effects.

In Wales, efforts have been made to enhance GPs' awareness of vaccine side effects. [Public Health Wales provides guidance documents and e-learning modules](#) for healthcare professionals to keep them informed about vaccine safety, potential side effects, and how to communicate with patients.

When it comes to [diagnosing and treating adverse reactions to the vaccine](#), this is based on clinical evaluations. In more severe cases, such as suspected blood clots, further diagnostic tests like blood tests or imaging may be used. For long-term symptoms like fatigue or pain, patients in Wales may be referred to the [Adferiad \(Recovery\) programme](#), a community-based rehabilitation service launched in June 2021. This programme has received funding to provide multi-professional services for people living with long Covid, and it includes funding for people with conditions like ME/CFS and fibromyalgia. The programme was [expanded in 2023](#) to offer services to individuals with ongoing physical symptoms but no clear diagnosis.

The Welsh Government state in response to the petition:

...if anyone is experiencing symptoms similar to those experienced by people with Long Covid, regardless of what may have caused them, I would encourage them to use the integrated community rehabilitation services established in all health boards via the Adferiad (Recovery) programme.

They also highlight that "those who have suffered from an adverse reaction may be eligible for a vaccine damage payment from a [compensation scheme](#) operated by the UK Government".



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1493  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/11068/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

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

03 January 2025

Dear Carolyn,

**Petition P-06-1493 Ensure diagnosis and treatment for people suffering from adverse Covid-19 vaccine side effects**

Thank you for your letter of 6 December regarding the above petition.

I was sorry to read about the petitioner's prolonged ill health. Covid-19 vaccines are generally safe – more than 100m doses have been given in the UK, with billions of doses given worldwide and overall, any adverse effects are minor and short lived. Regrettably, a small number of those vaccinated may experience adverse effects that are more severe, persistent or have lasting effect.

All vaccines used in the UK have been approved as safe and effective by the independent expert organisation, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The vaccinations given already are helping to save lives and ease pressure on the NHS by reducing the severity of Covid-19 should people contract it.

The MHRA continually monitors safety during widespread use of any vaccine to ensure vaccines are performing as expected, to identify any new side effects that may arise, and to ensure the benefits continue to outweigh the risks. It issues weekly reports about the safety of Covid-19 vaccines. The latest report is available here: [Coronavirus vaccine - weekly summary of Yellow Card reporting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-vaccine-weekly-summary-of-yellow-card-reporting)

Side effects can be reported directly via the Coronavirus Yellow Card reporting site. Anyone experiencing these side effects, can report the event directly: [Official MHRA side effect and adverse incident reporting site for coronavirus treatments and vaccines | Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/coronavirus-side-effect-reporting)

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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.

In addition, those who have suffered from an adverse reaction may be eligible for a vaccine damage payment from a compensation scheme operated by the UK Government. Further information about this scheme, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found via this [link](#).

I understand researchers are working to understand if there is any potential connection between the Covid-19 vaccination and what is being referred to as Long Vax.

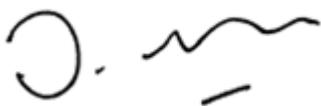
However, if anyone is experiencing symptoms similar to those experienced by people with Long Covid, regardless of what may have caused them, I would encourage them to use the integrated community rehabilitation services established in all health boards via the Adferiad (Recovery) programme.

We launched the Adferiad programme in June 2021 and invested £10m between 2021 and 2023. This was allocated to health boards which have developed community-focused integrated, multi-professional rehabilitation services, which allow for referral to specialist assessment where needed.

In March 2023, the then Minister for Health and Social Services announced an increase in annual funding for Adferiad services ([Written Statement: Adferiad Programme Update \(14 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)). The increased funding has enabled health boards to widen access to Adferiad-funded services to people with other post-acute infection illness on a needs/symptom-led basis; this includes people with conditions such as ME/CFS and fibromyalgia, as well as those with persistent physical symptoms, but no confirmed diagnosis.

We remain committed to continuing to support people with and recovering from the long-term effects of Covid-19.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Miles', with a stylized flourish below the name.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Dear Petition Committee,

I want to start this response by thanking the Petition Committee for giving me the chance to respond. I would also thank Jeremy Miles for acknowledging the following in his response, *"Regrettably, a small number of those vaccinated may experience adverse effects that are more severe, persist or have lasting effect."* It is the first acknowledgment from a Welsh Government Minister acknowledging that some do have persistent adverse effects to the covid vaccine.

### **Background**

I was diagnosed with Post Covid Vaccine Sequelae (PCVS) by a NHS Consultant in June 2022 (1). This was 15 months after the first AstraZeneca Covid vaccine in March 2021. I had an adverse reaction to the the first Covid vaccine. My GP at the time didn't know if these symptoms were due to my pre-existing diabetes, the start of fibromyalgia, or something autoimmune. I was advised to have the second AstraZeneca, within hours I had a relapse in symptoms - I have a timeline of appointments, I also kept a diary of daily symptoms due to my decline in remembering.

If there was better awareness to what Jeremy Miles has said in his response, *"regrettably a small number of those vaccinated may experience adverse effects that are more severe, persist or have lasting effect"*, I would have hopefully had been advised by the GP not to have the second Covid vaccine. If I had known what might have happened, I wouldn't have had the second AstraZeneca. There is still not enough awareness by health care professionals that these adverse effects can happen.

Being diabetic, I was classed as vulnerable, 1 of a group of 6 priority groups for the rollout of the covid vaccine. The Covid vaccine was supposed to protect me, to keep me safe in the job that I enjoyed. In 2021 I had difficulty in accessing healthcare, often being told to call back as there wasn't any appointments even though eg I explained that I was experiencing a new onset of pins and needles in my feet, legs, hands & arms or numbness in my foot.

In June 2021 one GP told me over the telephone *"your bloods are fine, you've been examined twice, graded exercises will help you"*.

This was an appointment for a new leg pain that I was experiencing and an increase/ relapse in other symptoms. The GP had never met me before, hadn't taken my activity history, eg that I'd walk my dog every day. The GP eventually agreed to an appointment, to just examine my leg, *"to put my mind at rest"*. I was examined and given a change of medication and a fit note for my employer.

It was not until August 2021 that I was eventually referred for a lumbosacral spine MRI & also a referral to Orthopedics for the pins and needles that had started in March 2021. I went private in October when we found out that Orthopedics were seeing Urgent 2020, I was Routine 2021, there were long waiting lists and I was extremely concerned regarding the pain and the symptoms. In January 2022 at the second Private Orthopedics appointment, the Consultant said *"I'd symptoms that needed ruling out"* & referred me to a Private Neurologist. In February 2022, Neurologist diagnosed, *"unexplained neurological symptoms in the aftermath of a covid vaccine "*.

He wrote in the clinic report *"This has been quite a common situation over the course of the last year, and I have seen numerous individuals with difficult to explain symptoms which arose around that time."*(3)

Some in the NHS were not accepting of the diagnosis. Being told I would *"need to challenge the Neurologist diagnosis "*. That *"chasing a diagnosis could harm my mental health "*.

It wasn't until later that year, 15 months after the first Covid vaccine in June 2022 I was eventually diagnosed with PCVS by a Long Covid NHS Consultant in the neighbouring health board. I will always be truly grateful to this hospital team.

There needs to be better awareness that some regrettably will suffer from adverse reactions, so healthcare professionals are aware that they know where to refer us to, so patients get seen sooner, we get the right tests, to get adequate treatment. The right tests, the right treatment, in the right place at the right time.

### **Patient information leaflet**

Not once were we given the information that *"a small number of those vaccinated may experience adverse effects that are more severe, persist or have lasting effect"*

The patient information leaflets did not state that some may experience adverse effects that are more severe, persist or have lasting effect. (4)

We were constantly told the covid vaccines were safe and effective.

*"Protect yourself, your loved ones, to keep Wales safe"* was the message from Welsh Government

Patients need all the available information, so we can make an informed decision regarding any possible risks. Much more is known now (5a,5b) compared to what information was provided in 2021 (4)

**There needs to be more research, to find the tests that we need to find out why we have reacted the way we have.**

Due to the way that my symptoms were dismissed by some, the stress of the way I'd been treated by some in the NHS, I've also had a relapse in my mental health.

There's many with 'Vaccine Injuries' who are now suffering from their mental health. Some have been suicidal because of the way our symptoms have been dismissed by some, the lack of treatment and inadequate support. (6a,6b)

I have had counselling for loss and adjustment, but no amount of counselling will take away what I have been through, the changes to my life, the way I have been treated by some, the lack of adequate treatment and support .

In May 2023 I was ill health retired at the age of 52. The independent registered medical practitioner states *"It is my opinion that Mrs Butler has significant physical, mental and sensory impairments that are likely to be long term and she is unlikely to recover to a level where she would be able to work again."* (7)

**The response from Jeremy Miles does not address what the petition is calling for**

*"I call for better awareness and an appropriate pathway for diagnosis and treatment for those experiencing such debilitating side effects."*

*"There needs to be more research into symptoms and illnesses that results from vaccination with improved diagnosis and treatment, specialist clinics or clinicians which can provide appropriate treatment"*

Without a pathway for diagnostic tests, there currently for many of us no diagnostic tests in the NHS or we are not meeting guidelines to be referred for further testing to find out why we have reacted the way we have, to get us well again. For many of us the tests that we have had are coming back as satisfactory, then there is no further testing done with the NHS because our results are satisfactory.

Some people are then going private, they are being offered further testing and then they are finding that there is something causing their ill health because of the Covid vaccine.

With no diagnostic pathway, how will we understand as to why we have had an adverse reaction to the covid vaccine, for us to receive adequate treatment but also to also stop what has happened to us from happening to others in the future.

By not providing adequate diagnostic testing, an adequate treatment pathway, I feel the lack of treatment and inadequate support will cause further hesitancy with the current vaccines and any future vaccines that might be needed in the future.

I'm now too scared to have any further Covid vaccines, I have declined further Covid vaccines eg boosters because I'm too scared after what I have been through. Our loved ones are witnessing what we are going through.

The public needs trust in the vaccines but also, they need to know if they do regrettably suffer an adverse reaction, that everything will be done to get them well again or they will be able to access adequate support.

If a medical procedure was to go wrong, the NHS would do what they could, to put things right. Why are we not getting the treatment that we need, to try to reverse these adverse reactions?

**The Adferiad (Recovery) program/ Post Covid Recovery**

The Adferiad (Recovery) program/ Post Covid Recovery is not a diagnostic pathway

October 2023 formal response from the CEO of ABUHB states:

*"The Post Covid Recovery Team offers a personalised rehabilitative programme when medical diagnostic pathways have been completed. "*

*"However, the team is not able to make a diagnosis of vaccine related harm as this is not a diagnostic service"*

*"The team works with people to understand the impact of their symptoms and offers individualised support to help them to manage and live with their concerns" (8)*

Early 2024 I started physiotherapy; I explained that I experienced Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM). After an assessment, a graded approach was used and through a series of seated and standing exercises with the aim to help me move little and often around the home (9).

After the physiotherapist assessment and the start of these exercises, I had a relapse in the fatigue (PEM) . Physiotherapy was stopped. I'm still not back to my baseline pre physiotherapy.

Long Covid physio websites state the following regarding Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM): "Fatigue experienced by people living with Long COVID can be experienced alongside post-exertion symptoms exacerbation. [Exercise](#) (10a) is not recommended as a rehabilitation intervention for people experiencing [fatigue](#) (10b) and [post-exertional symptoms exacerbation](#) (10c)

Yet graded exercises were given to me as rehabilitation

There needs to be better awareness of how these symptoms affect the patients, how these symptoms can be better managed to stop further relapses. The patients needed to be listened to, after all we live with these symptoms, we know how these symptoms affect us.

In 2021 some of my symptoms were dismissed by the NHS eg the flicking of my hand, whilst loss of the feeling of hunger was blamed on anxiety. One GP raised their voice at me, accusing me of not pushing up with my one leg. I later found out my one leg 'doesn't always do as it's told'.

Some of my experience of the NHS after suffering with the adverse reactions (11) (12)

I have gone from being active, two part time jobs, gardening, diy, walking my dog to now being reliant on my loved ones. Due to the pain and fatigue, I now use an electric wheelchair outside of the home. I was told by the Council OT that I wouldn't meet the criteria for a Disability Facility Grant because my husband is working. In December 2023 we had to self-fund a wet room costing £8,000, I now have the independence to shower.

Please will you consider my petition calling for a pathway for adverse reactions, to bring awareness to everyone in the NHS. To create a pathway for the diagnosis and treatment of adverse reactions to the covid vaccine, to get us well again. To stop patients from going through what we have faced since 2021?

I get so anxious attending medical appointments, I now carry the diagnosis clinic letter with me, just in case my symptoms or diagnosis are ever dismissed. I'm not the only one in Wales who has suffered from adverse reactions, I'm not the only one who has not had adequate treatment or support. I'm not the only one in the UK who have suffered from an adverse reaction to a covid vaccine.

I'm a member of UKCV Family(13) (14) a support group for those who are adversely affected by the covid vaccine.

### **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS)**

Quote "Vaccine Damage Payments are not a compensation scheme. You can still take legal action to claim compensation, even if you get a [Vaccine Damage Payment](#)." (15)

By not having a diagnostic pathway we cannot provide the epidemiological evidence that the VDPS is saying that is needed. Despite having a NHS diagnosis of Post Covid Vaccine Sequelae a reaction after my first, a relapse in symptoms on my second. The VDPS acknowledging a temporal relationship between receiving the vaccine and becoming ill, my application for the VDPS on balance of probability has been declined. (16)

The VDPS do not examine you, you do not even get to discuss your symptoms or the onset of side effects and how it's affected your life etc

The VDPS state there's no epidemiological evidence, which is difficult because there's currently no tests to find out why I've reacted the way I have.

### **By not having a diagnostic pathway, we are being stopped from providing the evidence that is needed to successfully claim the VDPS**

If you can prove causation, you then have to pass the 60% disablement

They use an outdated assessment, which doesn't cover so many of the symptoms that the vaccine injured are experiencing eg Neurological , Postural tachycardia syndrome (PoTS), Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) , Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM) etc If you lose your limb it's awarded but eg not if neurological symptoms giving you problems with walking it's not listed (17)

### **Guidance the medical assessor uses for the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (18)**

"Independent medical assessors use resources to support their assessment, including, but not limited to, some or all of the following:

- Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme - [Principles of Medical Assessment Guidance \(Word: 336KB\)](#)
- Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) data, including [Yellow Card](#) information on suspected safety concerns involving a healthcare product
- Vaccine product information and updates
- The Green Book - a reference material produced by the UK Health Security Agency and used by healthcare professionals in the UK. The Green Book brings together all documents relating to immunisation against infectious diseases. Visit [Immunisation against infectious disease: the green book front cover and contents page - GOV.UK](#) for more details
- Detailed guidance on disablement assessments relating to Schedule 2 of [The Social Security \(General Benefit\) Regulations 1982 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), which have been developed by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) documents
- Established and accepted medical epidemiological research papers

- Past tribunal decisions and case law"

### In the Principles of Medical Assessment Guidance

#### Item 3 , Medical Assessment, General Principles (19)

Quote "Clinical diagnosis should normally be accepted without a need to review. "

*The diagnosis by my NHS Consultant was dismissed by the VDPS*

#### Freedom of information ref 02351 ref Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme awarded

As of October 31st 2024 (20).

Currently, **16,824** claims have been received by the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS)

**8,806** claimants have been notified of an outcome.

**7,748** claims have been rejected, and a further 716 did not meet the criteria for medical assessment,

**8,208** claims were unsuccessful because the independent medical assessor recommended that, on the balance of probabilities, the vaccine did not cause the disability in question (causation).

**406** claims were unsuccessful because, although the claims met the criteria for causation, the independent medical assessor recommended that the vaccine has not caused severe disablement.

**70** claims where an award outcome has been communicated were made on behalf of someone who has died.

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#### Acknowledge

Whilst I acknowledge that the MHRA Yellow card, the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme is out of the scope of the Welsh Government. I've responded because Jeremy Miles explains about them in his response

#### Wes Streeting meets members from VIBUK

Recently some members of VIBUK (another vaccine injured and bereaved group) had a meeting with Health Secretary Wes Streeting to make their case for a reform of the Vaccine Damages Payment Scheme (VDPS). <https://www.leighday.co.uk/news/news/2024-news/vaccine-tragedy-campaigners-hopes-raised-by-meeting-with-wes-streeting/>

#### MHRA Yellow card reporting

Updating your yellow card is extremely challenging. In an email to Eluned Morgan April 2022 I'd explained how challenging this was. (21)

I've been in contact several times to the MHRA yellow card. I've had to chase up replies. I have even challenged them on why I wasn't asked any further questions, after I'd sent them information regarding being diagnosed by a Neurologist with unexplained neurological symptoms in the aftermath of a covid vaccine.

I was then sent several questions regarding my health, tests etc. When I'd updated them again, this time ref the Post Covid Vaccine Sequelae diagnosis, all they asked was for the clinic report. Since last contact made in early 2023, no one has been in contact with me. It's always been me contacting them. I have now given up on trying to keep them updated.

To the best of my knowledge no medical professional has submitted a yellow card for me. I've got copies of my emails to and from the MHRA Yellow card as evidence as how difficult it is to update. I've also requested a copy of my yellow card report (22)

#### As of 2nd January 2025 Yellow Card reports (23)

*AstraZeneca Yellow card reports of adverse reactions ...*

*Total number of reports of suspected ADRs 249,496*

*Total number of suspected adverse reactions 885,374*

*Total number of suspected ADRs which were serious 193,388*

*Total number of reports of suspected ADRs with a fatal outcome 1,468*

**Question** : If any other medication has over 1,000 suspected ADRs with a fatal outcome , would that medication be recalled?

#### Consideration

Please kindly take into consideration that due to health problems with fatigue, brain fog etc that any requests for further information may take me time to put together. Therefore, if you request further information, I might have to kindly request a reasonable adjustment in the timescale due to the current disabilities I'm facing.

Example - I'd received a very similar worded response from Jeremy Miles dated 21st November 2024 ( 24) and I'd already had been putting together a response since then, as the wording to both response are very similar and I'd most of the response written out ready, I am able to make this deadline . If I hadn't, I might not have completed this detailed response in just the 7 days' notice given for the 13th of January deadline.

I'm sorry this is more than the recommended 4 A4 pages, there is so much information to include. I've never done anything like this before and I hope the referencing is acceptable. I would also appreciate that items 1,3,7,8,9,16,22, are not published on the Senedd website because these are my personal medical information

## **References - links and also files attached**

1. Post COVID Vaccine Sequelae diagnosis clinic letters x 2 PDFs
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-care-home-and-healthcare-settings-posters/covid-19-vaccination-first-phase-priority-groups>
3. Neurologist clinic report
4. AstraZeneca Patient information leaflets from March & May 2021
- 5a. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca/information-for-uk-recipients-on-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>
- 5b. <https://www.astrazeneca.com/content/dam/azcovid/pdf/malta/en-epil-AZD1222.pdf>
- 6a. <https://news.sky.com/story/family-of-man-who-took-own-life-after-covid-jab-complications-call-for-action-on-government-compensation-13217959>
- 6b. <https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scotlands-vaccine-injured-feel-abandoned-29951760>
7. Independent Registered Medical Practitioner ill health retirement assessment report
8. CEO response ABUHB - with paragraph ref long covid recovery
9. Physiotherapy clinical letter - evidence of the graded approach to exercise
- 10a. <https://longcovid.physio/exercise>
- 10b. <https://longcovid.physio/fatigue>
- 10c. <https://world.physio/sites/default/files/2021-06/WPTD2021-InfoSheet3-Fatigue-and-PESE-Final-A4-v1.pdf>
11. <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138458/CC11%20-%20Alison%20Butler.pdf>
12. Every story matters - my experience of healthcare after the covid vaccine
13. UKCV family information pack & charity announcement
14. <https://www.ukcvfamily.org>
15. <https://www.gov.uk/vaccine-damage-payment>
16. VDPS report
17. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1982/1408/schedule/2>
18. <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/vaccine-damage-payment-scheme-vdps-claim-process>
19. <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/Principles%20of%20medical%20assessment%20%28Nov%2024%29.docx>
20. <https://opendata.nhsbsa.net/dataset/foi-02351>
21. Email to Eluned Morgan and reply
22. Alison Butler Yellow card report
23. <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/idaps/CHADOX1%20NCOV-19>
24. Response from Jeremy Miles dated November 2024

## Further links

Covid Inquiry Module 4 Vaccines and Therapeutics

<https://www.hudgellsolicitors.co.uk/news/public-inquiry/groups-give-covid-19-public-inquiry-evidence-of-vaccine-illness-and-lost-lives?>

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Preliminary hearing 13 September 2023

Pages 85-105

<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/13194707/C-19-Inquiry-13-September-23-Module-4-prelim.pdf>

Preliminary hearing 22 May 2024 Transcript

Pages 69-88

<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/23094440/C-19-Inquiry-Mod-4-prelim-22-May-2024-amended.pdf>

# P-06-1494 : Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 20 Ionawr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 20 January 2025

Reference: SR2410372-6

Petition Number: P-06-1494

Petition title: Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts

**Petition text:** ALN Reform Wales call on Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and LA cuts. There are numerous reports of LA's putting out consultations or actual published budgets with massive cuts to education budget. Jeremy Miles pledged to invest in education. This cannot be allowed to happen to the most vulnerable members of society. Recent reports show Wales education standards have fallen. Our children's education is the best investment in social justice and a healthy economy.

## 1. Summary

- Schools receive their **budgets from local authorities**, who use the funding, which they themselves receive from the Welsh Government through the local government settlement, to provide the range of services for which they are responsible.



- Funding from local authorities makes up the vast majority of funding that schools get, although the **Welsh Government provides some funding to schools from its education budget** through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG).
- The money local authorities have planned to spend on schools is referred to as budgeted expenditure. This has **increased in 2024-25 by 7.4%**, compared to 2023-24. It has increased by 35.2% since 2019-20. This is a 10.8% real terms increase since 2019-20 and a real terms 2.5% increase since 2010-11.
- The **Draft Budget 2025-26 is currently being scrutinised** by Senedd Committees. The Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025-26 provides **local authorities with an average 4.3% increase** compared to 2024-25.
- **School budget reserves**, the money schools themselves hold and as reported at a one-off point in the year, have been **historically high**, peaking during and after the pandemic, although have **decreased in the past two years**.
- The **WLGA has warned** of the inflationary pressures facing schools and reported shortfalls, largely related to pay.
- The Welsh Government has allocated **£38 million in 2025-26 to support the implementation of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reforms**. This funding is on top of money included in schools' core budgets to support pupils with ALN (£592 million in 2024-25, a 7.7% increase on the previous year).

## 2. Previous petitions and other scrutiny in the Senedd

### 2.1. Autumn 2023

This Committee considered a previous petition in autumn 2023, calling on the Welsh Government to “review the inadequate funding for schools in Wales”. The Committee took evidence from some chairs of governors and head teachers in November 2023.

The Committee wrote to the Finance Committee, the Local Government and Housing Committee, and the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE)

Committee ahead of scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2024-25 to bring the matter to their attention. The CYPE Committee discussed school budgets in its subsequent [report on the Draft Budget 2024-25](#) and made several recommendations to the Welsh Government.

## 2.2. Fifth Senedd: 2019

The Fifth Senedd's Petitions Committee considered a similar petition in 2019, which was to "Protect school funding or admit to the weakening of service provision" (P-05-872). This petition was drawn to the attention of the Fifth Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee which was undertaking a [policy inquiry into school funding at the time](#). This looked at both the sufficiency of the overall quantum of funding being made available to schools and the way in which that funding is distributed. In response, the Welsh Government commissioned a [review by education economist, Luke Sibieta](#).

## 2.3. Ongoing budget scrutiny

The CYPE Committee is again expected to raise the issue of school budgets with the Cabinet Secretary for Education during scrutiny of the [Draft Budget 2025-26](#) on [16 January](#).

# 3. How are schools in Wales funded?

## 3.1. Un-hypothecated funding for local authorities

The large majority of funding for schools comes from local authorities, which in turn receive the majority of their funding from the annual [local government settlement](#) set by the Welsh Government. The money for this is contained within the Housing and Local Government budget ('Main Expenditure Group' (MEG)).

To put this into context, of the [£3.6 billion budgeted for schools in the current year \(2024-25\)](#), around £3.3 billion comes from local authorities. The remainder comes from the Welsh Government's Education budget (see section 3.2 below).

The [local government settlement is un-hypothecated](#), meaning it is for each local authority to decide how to allocate their available resources to the various services they provide, including education, and within that how much funding they give to schools.

There are **three main steps** to the process for setting school budgets:

- Firstly, the Welsh Government provides each local authority with its **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**. Together with its redistributed non-domestic rates allocation, this makes up a local authority's Aggregate External Finance (AEF). Each local authority uses this plus the money it raises from council tax to fund the range of services it provides, including education. Each **local authority's RSG is arrived at using a formula**, based on Standard Spending Assessments (SSA) which are notional calculations of how much each local authority needs to maintain a standard level of service. SSAs are broken down into Indicator Based Assessments (IBA) which model notionally the amount needed in each service sector. 'School services' is one of the SSA sectors used for the IBAs.<sup>1</sup>
- Secondly, once they have decided how much of their overall budget to allocate to education, local authorities set **three tiers of education budget**:
  - The Local Authority Education Budget is for central functions relating to education, including but not wholly comprising expenditure on schools.
  - The Schools Budget contains expenditure which is directly aimed at supporting schools but considered to be more efficiently administered centrally.
  - The Individual Schools Budget (ISB) is the remainder of education funding which is delegated to schools.

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<sup>1</sup> The Welsh Government says SSAs and IBAs are not spending targets and should not be treated as such. They represent a notional estimate of what a local authority needs to provide a standard level of service (although they are dependent on the overall quantum of funding made available by the Welsh Government for the local government settlement). They also build in an assumption of what the local authority can raise from council tax.

- Thirdly, the local authority sets the **individual budget for each school** it maintains, apportioning the ISB according to its own locally determined formula, within the parameters set by the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.

### 3.2. Additional funding from the Welsh Government's Education budget

On top of the budget each school receives from their local authority, the Welsh Government provides funding through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) which supports national priorities and objectives.

The LAEG was created in 2024-25 following the merging of a number of previously separate funding streams. The two main components of this funding were the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and an already packaged grant in the form of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG). Other encompassed funding included Welsh in Education grants and the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRS) funding put in place for the educational recovery from the pandemic.

The LAEG consists of four strands, **totalling £379 million in 2024-25<sup>2</sup> and £400 million in 2025-26**. Allocations to the four strands are follows:

- Education Reform: 2024-25: £59 million, 2025-26: £67 million
- School Standards: 2024-25: £160 million, 2025-26: £168 million

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<sup>2</sup> On 6 December 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced an additional £50 million for education to be provided in-year in 2024-25. This included funding to be distributed via the LAEG. This funding will be formalised in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplementary Budget 2024-25 in February. Therefore, the value of the LAEG in 2024-25 is likely to be higher than the £379m cited here.

- Equity in Education (including PDG): 2024-25: £150 million, 2025-26: £156 million
- Cymraeg 2050: 2024-25: £10 million, 2025-26: £9 million.

The Welsh Government's Education budget (the 'Education MEG'), which as discussed does not contain core funding for schools, is increasing in the Draft Budget 2025-26 by £84 million (4.9%) from £1.716 billion to £1.800 billion. This comparison is with the revised baseline the Welsh Government has calculated for comparison purposes and excludes non-fiscal (non-cash) funding, which it has not discretion over how it is used.

Around two-thirds of the total Education MEG is for post-16 education, although there are several increases to pre-16 education budgets, including the LAEG.

## 4. Current funding position

### 4.1. Local Government Settlement 2025-26

As explained in section 3 above, the predominant source of funding for schools' budgets is provided by the Welsh Government to local authorities through the un-hypothecated Aggregate External Finance (AEF) / Revenue Support Grant (RSG) within the local government settlement.

The Provisional Local Government Settlement 2025-26 provides a **4.3% overall increase** to local authorities compared to 2024-25 (ranging from 2.8% in Monmouthshire to 5.6% for Newport). This amounts to an additional £253 million. It will be for **local authorities to decide on which services this increase is spent**. This follows 3.3%, 7.9% and 9.4% increases in 2024-25, 2023-24 and 2022-23 respectively.

In her paper to the CYPE Committee on the Draft Budget 2025-26, the Cabinet Secretary for Education says she and Cabinet colleagues have "continued to prioritise" local government funding (from which schools, along with social care, are the main recipients) "to safeguard as far as possible core funding to schools". However, as the WLGA's submission to the Finance Committee's consultation ahead of the Draft Budget outlines, local authorities face £559 million of financial pressures in 2025-26, which the WLGA say would require a 7% funding increase to address in full.

The WLGA estimates £122 million of pressures in schools in 2025-26, projecting further shortfalls of £111 million and £112 million in 2026-27 and 2027-28 respectively. They say pay accounts for 80% of these pressures.

#### 4.1.a. Meeting the cost of the teachers' pay award

As already explained, the additional funding notionally allocated within the RSG for schools is not ringfenced and it will be up to local authorities whether they use it in this way. However, they will in any case **have to meet the costs of the teachers' pay award for academic year 2024/25.**

Teachers have been awarded a 5.5% pay rise for academic year 2024/25. The Cabinet Secretary committed in November to provide additional funding to support local authorities and schools. Her paper to the CYPE Committee regarding the Draft Budget 2025-26 says £18.164 million is being given to local authorities from the Education MEG in 2024-25 for the costs from September to March. There is £12.974 million in the RSG in 2025-26 for the costs from March to August, with a further £18.164 million for the costs moving forward. However, this is **less than the estimated costs** given in the Regulatory Impact Assessment of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Order 2024, which were £56 million in 2024-25 and £96 million in 2025-26.

#### 4.1.b. Local Authority Education Grant

As explained in section 3.2 above, the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) is worth £378 million in 2024-25 and £400 million in 2025-26.

### 4.2. School funding levels over recent years

The Welsh Government publishes data annually on the total amount of expenditure that is budgeted for schools. This includes schools' core budgets, provided by local authorities and financed from the RSG, and the grant funding from the Welsh Government's Education budget. Table 1 below provides data for recent years:

Table 1: Gross budgeted expenditure on schools

	<b>£ Per Pupil</b>		
	Gross Budgeted Expenditure on schools <b>£ Billion</b>	Gross Budgeted Expenditure on schools	Percentage delegated to schools
2024-25	3.591	7926	80.6
2023-24	3.343	7327	81.9
2022-23	3.096	6773	82.9
2021-22	2.913	6387	83.4
2020-21	2.822	6203	83.7
2019-20	2.657	5857	83.9
2018-19	2.566	5675	84.2
2017-18	2.543	5628	84.2
2016-17	2.519	5570	84.3
2015-16	2.496	5526	83.8
2014-15	2.528	5607	82.9
2013-14	2.519	5594	82.3
2012-13	2.495	5520	81.0
2011-12	2.470	5451	76.2
2010-11	2.458	5409	75.0

Source: Welsh Government, [Statistical Bulletins: Local authority budgeted expenditure on schools](#) (several years' editions)

- Total funding for schools in 2024-25 is **7.4% higher than in 2023-24 (4.9% higher in real terms\*)**. Funding per pupil is 8.2% higher (5.7% higher in real terms\*).
- Funding has risen since 2019-20 by **35.2% in cash terms and 10.8% in real terms\***. Increases per pupil are 35.3% in cash terms and 11.0% in real terms\*.
- Taking a longer backward look, funding has **increased in real terms\* by 2.5% (2.8% per pupil) since 2010-11**.

\* Real terms changes are calculated using the [HM Treasury GDP deflators for October 2024](#).

### 4.3. School reserves

The CYPE Committee has questioned Ministers during previous years' budget scrutiny regarding the level of budget reserves held by schools. These are recorded as at 31 March each year and **since March 2021 have been considerably higher than the historical norm, although there were reductions in 2023 and 2024.**The Welsh Government's explanation for the comparatively high levels has been that schools had built up reserves due to the pandemic, including because they had received resources relatively late in the financial year, with the annual reporting resulting in a misleading picture.

Schools have been increasingly drawing on these reserves and the WLGA "project that school reserves will continue to reduce at a significant rate as budget savings need to be made", which they say "is not a sustainable position". They warn "where school expenditure continues to exceed the income they receive there is a likelihood that school reserve balances will be soon in a net deficit position".

Table 2 below shows the levels of school reserves over recent years.

Table 2: Reserves held by schools

	Total	Per Pupil
March 2024	£115m	£253
March 2023	£208m	£456
March 2022	£301m	£659
March 2021	£181m	£393
March 2020	£32m	£70
March 2019	£46m	£102
March 2018	£50m	£111
March 2017	£46m	£102
March 2016	£64m	£142
March 2015	£64m	£141
March 2014	£60m	£132

Source: Welsh Government, Statistical First Release: Reserves held by schools (several years' editions)

There is considerable variation between local authority areas. Isle of Anglesey have the highest reserves at £602 per pupil. Two authorities have negative reserves – Neath Port Talbot: £9 per pupil and Monmouthshire: £14 per pupil.

#### 4.4. Funding for Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The petition has been submitted by ‘ALN Reform Wales’. The education sector is currently implementing the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system, established by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which is replacing the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.

The CYPE Committee is scrutinising the implementation of ALN reforms throughout this Senedd term and published an interim report in July. Funding pressures was cited as a key challenge to implementation and the CYPE Committee recommended the Welsh Government review how ALN provision is funded in mainstream schools.

The Welsh Government publishes annual data on budgeted expenditure on SEN/ALN. The latest release (2024-25) showed that total expenditure on SEN/ALN provision in schools by local authorities is budgeted to be **£592 million in 2024-25**, an **increase of £42.3 million or 7.7%** compared with the previous year. 29% of the total budgeted SEN/ALN expenditure is delegated to special schools. Notional allocations within the budgets local authorities give to nursery, primary, middle and secondary schools account for a further 42% of the total. The remaining 29% is funding held centrally by local authorities (as part of the Local Authority Education and Schools budgets referred to in section 3.1 of this briefing).

In addition, the Welsh Government allocates money from its Education budget for ALN. There is a dedicated ALN budget line plus funding contained in the Education Reform strand of the LAEG. The Cabinet Secretary’s paper to the CYPE Committee on the Draft Budget 2025-26 says these combined **provide £38 million per year for ALN**, on top of the funding contained in schools’ core budgets.

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.

Lynne Neagle AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1494  
Our ref LN/10537/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

18 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Petition P-06-1494 Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts.

I recognise that the cost-of-living crisis is putting schools and local authorities under significant pressure. I appreciate the great efforts of the school workforce as they continue to operate in a challenging context including persistent levels of absenteeism and impacts to behaviour in classrooms, mental health and wellbeing issues. Since taking up my position as Cabinet Secretary for Education earlier this year, I have listened to our education partners across Wales and understand the challenges they are facing.

On 6 December I announced an additional £50m in 2024-25 to support education standards and infrastructure across Wales. This reflects the importance, and my commitment, to invest in our learners and the education system which supports them.

Whilst we welcomed the UK Government's Autumn Budget which provides extra revenue and capital funding for the Welsh Government in 2024-25 and 2025-26, we continue to face significant financial challenges. Our Draft Budget for 2025-26 was published on the 10 December. Our budget focuses on our priorities, including those set out by the First Minister, and on ensuring public services continue to deliver for 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.

We are prioritising investment to local authorities, just as we have in previous years, by providing an increase of £253m to the Local Government Settlement in 2025-26, a like for like basis uplift of 4.3%. We will continue to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure we do all we can within the funding available.

Across 2024-25 and 2025-26, the education sector is set to benefit from £225.5m in funding, with schools, colleges and other settings receiving funding to help meet the needs of learners across Wales. This is in addition to the proposed increase to the Local Government Settlement in 2025-26, which recognises the powerful points that local authority partners and our schools have made around pressures to deliver upon the statutory responsibility for ALN and wider education provision.

In supporting schools and local authorities, and in taking forward the additional investment, we have increased the additional funding we provide through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) by 5.5% overall compared to 2024-25, to a total of just under £400m.

In addition to a further £15m in-year funding to support Additional Learning Needs (ALN), the 2025-26 Draft Budget also protects and continues to prioritise investment of over £37.6m revenue funding in ALN reform. This includes an extra £14m to increase support to deliver Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act statutory responsibilities. This will bring the total funding directly allocated to local authorities and education settings to £32m.

Since 2020, WG has significantly increased investment in ALN, with more than £107m to support implementation of our ALN reforms as well as providing £60m capital investment to local authorities in Wales to improve facilities and infrastructure for learners with ALN. Over £150m of revenue funding has also been allocated to support ALN in the post-16 FE sector through post-16 specialist placements and Additional Learning Support funding.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is investing over £750m over the next nine years to continue to improve and expand existing facilities and create new specialist provision.

A sustained improvement in educational standards in Wales is my top priority and I've set out my key priorities to drive improvements in my [Oral Statement on 5 November](#). These include improving attendance rates and the importance of literacy and numeracy as the fundamentals of learning. The Curriculum and ALN reform also remain central. I've discussed my priorities with Directors of Education and have written to all schools, so they are informed.

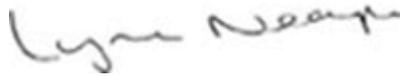
An additional £20m will be provided through the School Standards element of the LAEG to improve standards in schools, boosting this package of support to £180m in 2024-25. This additional in-year funding will provide much needed support to schools and other settings to help meet the needs of learners.

We are taking immediate action to support attainment, including an additional £1.1m investment this year in literacy, numeracy, and science programmes. That includes £470,000 to extend the *Research on the Instruction of Language with Literacy* Programme, which has already seen learners improve their reading skills by up to 20% and we have increased our investment in the Maths Support Programme to over £500,000 this year – giving more learners access to maths masterclasses, maths clubs, and further professional learning for teachers.

Literacy and numeracy are the building blocks of learning, and we are also investing an additional £10m to support learning and attainment in these areas as part of the 2025-26 Draft Budget.

It is vital that communication channels are active during these especially difficult times and we are committed to maintaining the open and constructive dialogue we have established with our partners across the system as we work together to deliver the very best for our learners.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

## **P-06-1494 Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts - Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

My response to the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education in relation to my petition P-06-1494.

I don't feel that the issues have been completely understood. While we are aware of the investments made into education by WG the petition was to request consideration of WG ring-fencing funds to be protected for education within LA budgets. Last year's multiple LAs made massive cuts to their education budgets and the general feeling was that this was an easy cut to be made. It wasn't only parents that were concerned. Headteachers from many different areas within different LAs were sending out letters warning parents of the impacts of the cuts on their children which included staff redundancies, loss of 1:1 staff and cuts to ALN services within schools. This should never be the case.

Parents continue to contact us on a daily basis asking for support with their children not having their needs met at school. The frequency of pleas for help is only increasing particularly in the last 6 months. Whether this is as a result of the budget cuts or the funding going to the wrong places is unclear.

Today we heard that the Children's Committee was told the number of children waiting for an autism or ADHD assessment in Wales could nearly triple to 61,000 over the next two years. We know there is a link between the number of recorded ALN children decreasing and an increase families trying to get a diagnosis. Families of children with ALN in Wales are feeling unsupported by schools and local authorities. Parents are desperately trying to get a diagnosis simply to get their child's needs recognised. It all comes back to the fact that the professionals who are now meant to recognise the needs are teachers. They are not mini educational psychologists. A lot of professionals are unaware of masking/fawning or can't recognise them. Professionals are not aware of different presentations like female presentations which are often different to the text books. Academic children who are achieving acceptable grades are overlooked while they struggle with social/emotional or sensory needs. These in between children are surviving and not thriving and some of them will end up in burnout or with emotionally based school non attendance and some will even have school related trauma. The Cabinet Secretary for Education talked about absenteeism in schools in her letter. As she has raised it I would like to ask her why no-one is looking at the true causes for this. Why is there an assumption that it's the parents fault and that fines will fix it? Forcing children to attend a place where their needs are not being met and they don't feel safe every day is not going to solve anything. While schools and LAs continue to deny children's additional learning needs there will continue to be high levels of non attendance. It's an impossible situation for parents and a desperate

place for many children. At the bottom I have added a link to an article written from a research paper on school distress. A very insightful read.

We urge the Welsh Government to take immediate and decisive action to address these issues. Ring-fencing funds for education within local authority budgets (for ALN in particular) is a necessary first step to ensure that every child has access to the support they need to thrive in school. Education is the foundation of our children's future, and it must be protected from the pressures of budget cuts.

We ask that you prioritize the voices of families, educators, and professionals in these discussions and work collaboratively to create a system that meets the needs of all learners. Without swift intervention, we fear that the challenges faced by children with ALN will only continue to grow, with long-lasting consequences for their well-being and education.

Yours sincerely,

Cath Drews

<https://researchfeatures.com/children-frontline-neurodivergence-school-distress/>

# Agenda Item 3.1

**P-06-1184 Immediately ban the use of toxic lead in all ammunition in Wales... lead is killing our wildlife!**

This petition was submitted by Robert Curtis, having collected a total of 4,052 signatures.

## **Text of Petition:**

Lead is a toxic metal and a very strong poison yet more than 6,000 tonnes are fired at game birds each year in the UK. If any citizen deliberately dumped thousands of tonnes of poison into the Welsh countryside they would rightly find themselves facing prosecution in a Court of Law!

Birds often mistake tiny shot pellets for grit or seeds, and ingest them, and so suffer painful deaths. Dying birds are usually taken quickly by predators – making their deaths unseen and invisible to the public.

## **Additional Information:**

Most ammunition –bullets, shotgun pellets and airgun pellets have traditionally been made with lead.

Lead affects most body systems in animals, including the nervous and circulatory systems, and low levels of exposure can affect a birds immune system and behaviour. In some circumstances , swallowing even a single lead pellet can kill a bird.

A consortium of shooting organisations now support a switch to ammunition that is free of lead by everyone taking live quarry with shotguns in the next five years.

We welcome this recognition of the damage lead is doing to our environment but believe the ecological emergency demands that we impose an immediate ban on lead ammunition of all kinds. We also believe that the ban must include clay shoots and not just "live quarry" as the wasted lead shot still ends up in the environment.

Barry Action is a small volunteer conservation group based in the South Wales coastal town of Barry.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

**P-06-1184 Immediately ban the use of toxic lead in all ammunition in Wales... lead is killing our wildlife! - Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Hello

We would like to make the following statement to the petitions committee concerning the proposed ban of outdoor lead shot by the HSE:

"Members of Barry Action for Nature welcomed the HSE's statement calling for a ban on outdoor lead shot. This follows a massive consultation and the categorical evidence that lead shot is poisoning our wildlife, and has done for decades.

We now call on the Senedd to legislate as soon as possible for a Wales wide ban and consign lead shot to the dustbin of history alongside snares!

We must, however, question the British and Welsh shooting industry who has constantly resisted this vital policy change which will now go on to help protect nature in Wales and throughout the rest of the UK!"

Thanks

# Agenda Item 3.2

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

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

### **Text of Petition:**

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

Examples of issues include:

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

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

### **Additional Information:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

# Agenda Item 3.3

## P-06-1242 Improve Endometriosis Healthcare in Wales

This petition was submitted by Beth Hales, having collected a total of 5,895 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Endometriosis devastates the lives of women and their families living in Wales with 1 in 10 suffering with the condition.

The cause of endometriosis is unknown, there is no cure, the average diagnosis time is currently 8.5 years and there's a 6 year waiting list for treatment on the NHS.

The demonstrable lack of understanding of the condition is detrimentally impacting society at all levels. Funding therefore needs to be prioritised to ensure equality of healthcare in Wales.

### **Additional Information:**

A report commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2018 highlighted how big a problem we're facing with resources being wasted and harm currently being caused to individuals suffering with Endometriosis. Despite the findings showing impacts on healthcare, education, economic, financial and social levels within society, most recommendations haven't been adopted, and in many areas things have instead worsened for sufferers of Endometriosis.

(Below is the link to this Government report – Endometriosis care in Wales: Provision, care pathway, workforce planning and quality and outcome measures.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/endometriosis-care-in-wales-provision-care-pathway-workforce-planning-and-quality-and-outcome-measures.pdf>).

Please sign this petition to help raise awareness of Endometriosis and encourage the Welsh Government to allocate the appropriate level of funding for this condition so we can take steps towards achieving equality of healthcare in Wales.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

**P-06-1242 – Improve Endometriosis Healthcare in Wales - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 14 January 2025**

- **What are your thoughts on the [attached document](#)?**

The publication of the Women’s Health Plan is a long-awaited and positive step forward for Women’s Health in Wales. I’m very hopeful that this is the start of the change we need to achieve equality for future generations. I’m particularly pleased that the development of the Plan has been a collaborative piece of work, as it’s vital that patients lived experiences inform the decisions made by Welsh Government.

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

The issues I initially raised regarding endometriosis care in Wales stemmed from the inequalities that women, girls and those assigned female at birth are faced with due to insufficient healthcare, and how this impacts lives more widely on a social justice level. The Women’s Health Plan is a step in the right direction, but until tangible results from the Plan are seen, we unfortunately won’t know if it adequately addresses the issues regarding endometriosis healthcare in Wales.

For example, the Plan mentions the importance of research and ‘data-driven decision-making’, but this is only possible if we have the ability to collect data regarding specific conditions such as endometriosis. Historically there hasn’t been a specific data code for endometriosis, and instead Health Boards have only been able to review data for gynaecological conditions more widely. Knowledge is power, so I’d hope that elements such as this are addressed as the Plan progresses.

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

I’d ask that the Petitions Committee write to the Minister for a response on the question raised by Jenny Rathbone MS during Plenary on 10 December 2024, as I don’t believe the question was answered - *“my question around this is that we can't go on having only one tertiary centre, because Cardiff simply cannot fund this on the basis of one in, one out, given that these operations can take up to eight hours, involving several specialist clinicians. So, two medium-term issues: the financial model, and I wonder if you can say a bit more about how we're going to develop this financial model for further tertiary centres, because it really isn't fair that people from north Wales or west Wales have to come all the way to Cardiff, and, frankly, the people in Cardiff already have a very long waiting list. So, we clearly need more endo consultants. If you could say a little bit more about that medium-term thing, because this is something that we've really been asking for a very long time.”*

The lack of tertiary care is one of the main points I've been trying to raise via my petition and now that the Women's Health Plan has been launched I'd hope there is some more detail that could be provided on how/when help is coming for patients in the form of increased numbers of specialist surgeons. We're repeatedly informed about the endometriosis nurses, who are a fantastic resource, but it is only the endometriosis specialist consultants who can diagnose and treat the condition.

- **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?**

I would like to put on record my appreciation for the ongoing support I've had from the Petitions Committee and the clerking team - you have given me and my family much needed hope that our voices can be heard regarding this issue, which continues to have such a huge impact on our lives.

I would also like to note that the Endometriosis Task and Finish Group Report highlighting the issues with endo care in Wales was published in 2018, my petition closed in 2022 and the Women's Health Plan was launched in 2024, so after 7 years we're now hoping to see the start of change with this issue. I fully understand that change takes time, especially when there is no quick fix, but please understand that patients are not able to ask the progression of this disease to patiently wait and stop the ongoing damage. My endo health issues are relentless and I'm still only able to get support for the condition through private healthcare. My daughters have grown up seeing first-hand the impact of this disease and the inequality they are faced with due to their gender. I hope that my petition can be kept open until answers to the questions raised in my response are answered, but if not I ask for them that if tangible progress isn't made over the next year as the Women's Health Plan progresses, the Committee will agree for a future petition on endometriosis to be accepted and re-considered.

Finally, I would also ask that the Petitions Committee consider the following response from the charity Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales who I volunteer with as one of their endometriosis champions:

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

*FTWW is pleased that endometriosis and adenomyosis feature so prominently in the Women's Health Plan, and that this is based on extensive feedback from the patient community. We note also that the theme of women and patients not feeling like their voices are heard when it comes to their symptoms and health-related experiences and care is prioritised as per findings from the 'NHS Wales Discovery Report'.*

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

We understand that the Women's Health Plan in its current form is not an implementation or delivery plan, and that this will come next, following the creation of associated task & finish groups set up to explore various health issues and themes in more detail, and oversee the implementation of recommendations. However, it's important to note that a very comprehensive set of recommendations was developed following the year-long 2017-18 Welsh Government endometriosis task & finish group, and we have not yet seen all those fulfilled. **We would strongly advise that the work of that group be reviewed, and outstanding recommendations revisited, completed, and reported against.**

**Structural issues in the Welsh NHS need to be considered and actively addressed as a matter of urgency, including the problems presented by block funding to health boards, and how this can prevent 'regional collaboration' recommended by the former Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care (now First Minister) Eluned Morgan, particularly when it comes to accessing specialist tertiary services only available in one or two health boards. Our understanding is that the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC, formerly WHHSC) has been consulted on commissioning and appropriately funding tertiary endometriosis services for Wales but, as yet, we have not heard any conclusions to these conversations; we and the patient community would appreciate further updates on this.**

**Provision in Primary Care for endometriosis as a chronic illness:** It's important to be aware that endometriosis is a chronic disease with the same prevalence in women and people registered female at birth as diabetes or asthma. Whilst we appreciate the ongoing Welsh Government commitment to specialist endometriosis nurses in each health board, the number of nurses per head of affected population is not sufficient. **Wales should aim to have an equivalent number of nurses in primary care for menstrual & gynaecological health conditions like endometriosis as it offers for diabetes / asthma.** Patients with a chronic illness of this type deserve the same access and monitoring of their conditions / treatments as is offered to conditions which aren't gender-specific.

We would urge the Committee to enquire as to how the **GMS contract and Quality and Assurance Framework** therein can be amended to include menstrual and gynaecological health conditions which are currently not referenced (<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-02/quality-assurance-and-improvement-framework-2021-2022.pdf#:~:text=Disease%20Registers%20are%20lists%20of%20patients%20register@d%20with,this%20will%20be%20written%20into%20the%20contract%20regulations>) – it is our belief that their inclusion would lead to better, more robust data collection and improved care. However, as yet, we have not been able to progress this issue further. It may be that work on the Women's Health Plan and 'Women's Health Hubs' focuses on this, but we believe that **the Committee's support and influence in this area would be beneficial.**

**Endometriosis and Mental Health:** In terms of managing endometriosis, the vast majority of patients surveyed by Endometriosis UK in 2020, stated that they would benefit from psychological and mental health support to help them manage chronic pain, other symptoms, and potential fertility challenges. We would like to see a **Welsh Government commitment to investment in community mental health services for patients living with chronic physical illness.**

**Endometriosis Research in Wales:** Finally, it's also worth pointing out that recent NICE guidance on endometriosis still fails to include **endometriosis post-menopause or outside of the pelvis.** Lack of robust research and data on these topics is one reason for their continuing exclusion from scope, so **we would ask that these two issues be recommended for further research in Wales, as part of the Welsh Government's commitment to 'women's health research'.**

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

As an organisation and Chairs of the third sector Women's Health Wales Coalition, we are pleased to have had ongoing engagement with the Clinical Network for Women's Health throughout the development and publication of the NHS Wales Women's Health Plan. However, we would welcome more clarity as soon as possible on how this will continue as the Plan is implemented. **We are particularly keen to understand how the Clinical Reference Groups posited will be administered and their findings fed back into the Women's Health Leadership Group.** We remain concerned that the absence of third sector representation on the leadership group means that patient priorities / experiences and the operational requirements of organisations outside of the NHS may not be adequately considered or discussed at this level. This is particularly important in the context of third sector organisations as equitable partners, sometimes commissioned by the NHS and / or the Welsh Government to deliver services. There is a risk that the interface between clinical advisory and leadership groups may not be adequately resourced or sufficiently robust, running the risk of miscommunication and inefficiencies. **We would welcome assurances on this and, indeed, a commitment to revisiting arrangements if needed.**

# Agenda Item 3.4

## **P-06-1444 Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd**

This petition was submitted by Delyth, having collected a total of 1,347 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Not everyone can afford to travel to Wrexham.

Not everyone can afford to pay privately to go to a Menopause clinic.

Not everyone has the time to go to Wrexham, maybe they care for children and family members etc.

Everyone should have the choice.

This should be on our doorstep in Ysbyty Gwynedd with more specialist services local to North Wales including regularly updates for GP's, Gynaecologists, practitioners and employers supporting them on Menopause and the benefits of HRT.

### **Additional Information:**

The health board expect women to travel to the nearest NHS menopause clinic in Wrexham, as they are cutting back the little support we have in Ysbyty Gwynedd, this is not acceptable and especially in the current financial crisis.

We need resource on our doorstep local to us; the health board do not meet the demands of women suffering the ordeal, misery, pain, and discomfort along with all the other symptoms of the Menopause and the impact on their family.

Welsh Government must invest more in menopause resources and services in Wales.

Women are struggling to stay in their employment, along with sometimes having caring responsibilities. Women leave work as they cannot cope with the some of the symptoms.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ynys Môn
- North Wales



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

Bloc 5, Llys Carlton, Parc Busnes Llanelwy,  
Llanelwy, LL17 0JG

-----  
Block 5, Carlton Court, St Asaph Business  
Park, St Asaph, LL17 0JG

Carolyn Thomas MS,  
Chair,  
Petitions Committee,  
Welsh Parliament,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff,  
CF99 1SN

**Ein cyf / Our ref:** CS/CT(CE24/1101)

**☎:** 01745 448788 ext 6382

**Gofynnwch am / Ask for:** Emma Hughes

**E-bost / Email:** [emma.hughes19@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:emma.hughes19@wales.nhs.uk)

**Dyddiad / Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Sent by email - [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

Dear Chair,

**RE: Petition P-06-1444: Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd.**

Thank you for your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, sent in your capacity as Chair of the Senedd Petitions Committee, requesting information regarding menopause services, following consideration of the above petition on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

All of the Health Board's Consultant Gynaecologists see patients with menopause related symptoms within their clinics across the region. Specialist Menopause Clinics are also offered with three Consultant Gynaecologists who are accredited as menopause specialists by the British Menopause Society. Delivered virtually and in person from Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor Hospital, these clinics offer specialist advice to patients from across North Wales who have more complex needs. Our menopause specialists also deliver regular e-advice sessions to promote menopause awareness amongst primary care healthcare professionals.

Six of our consultants are currently undertaking the British Menopause Society's menopause training, which will further strengthen our ability to provide specialist menopause advice closer to home for women across North Wales.

We are taking a number of actions to expand and sustain our ability to support this patient group, including training and education for our medical and nursing colleagues in both primary and secondary care, as well as education for women via webinars and teaching sessions. Job plans for the menopause specialists are currently being reviewed, to provide additional physical and virtual capacity across North Wales.

Consideration is also being given to a pilot of virtual sessions with GPs, in order to review their cases and provide them with specialist advice without the need for referral into secondary care.

---

**Cyfeiriad Gohebiaeth ar gyfer y Cadeirydd a'r Prif Weithredwr / Correspondence address for Chairman and Chief Executive:**  
Swyddfa'r Gweithredwyr / Executives' Office  
Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd  
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2PW

**Paec Page 145** [www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk) / **Web:** [www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.bcu.wales.nhs.uk)

Mae Swyddfa'r Prif Weithredwr yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a bydd yn sicrhau y darperir ymateb yn Gymraeg heb oedi.  
The Chief Executive's Office welcomes correspondence through the medium of Welsh and will ensure that a response is provided in Welsh without incurring a delay



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

In the short-term, to increase capacity we are introducing the concept of 'Menopause Super Clinics', which include one of our menopause specialists working alongside two consultants who are currently in training.

Turning to your question about the Welsh language, I can confirm that the service is currently undertaking a monitoring exercise to establish compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, working closely with the Health Board's Welsh Language Team. Part of this work relates to processes for establishing patients' preferred language, and understanding the language skills of staff within the service, in order to match Welsh speaking patients with a Welsh speaking health professional. If an individual required an appointment through the medium of Welsh, and a Welsh speaking health professional was not available, the Welsh Language Team would be contacted to provide simultaneous translation for the appointment. Outside office hours, the Health Board has a contract with 'The Big Word', who provide simultaneous translation services.

We fully recognise the important role that patient feedback can play in informing service improvements. Feedback is collected on a regular basis from women who attend for face-to-face consultations and we have recently adapted our feedback forms to make it easier to identify menopause related responses.

Meanwhile, we have a collection of very-specific feedback from specialist clinics which is extremely positive, although delays in receiving consultation understandably remains a cause for concern.

I hope that this response provides some reassurance about the Health Board's commitment to provide accessible, high-quality menopause services across North Wales. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Shillabeer'.

---

**Carol Shillabeer**  
**Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive**

**P-06-1444 Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

I have highlighted in yellow to help to see my response, as the committee kindly asked me to respond to Carol Shillabeere : 13/1/24 reply

**RE: Petition P-06-1444: Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd.**

Thank you for your letter of 17th October 2024, sent in your capacity as Chair of the Senedd Petitions Committee, requesting information regarding menopause services, following consideration of the above petition on 30th September 2024.

I am very grateful for the response from Carol Shillabeer to the Chair of the Senedd, however I feel that she doesn't really answer the concerns in full, it is a very good measured response but still does not answers the petitions concerns and it is also a very similar response to the previous response given by Helen Stevens-Jones and Eluned Morgan's. I feel the main concern is still to be addressed, women of North Wales need a clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd, Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor are not central to North Wales

All of the Health Board's Consultant Gynaecologists see patients with menopause related symptoms within their clinics across the region. Specialist Menopause Clinics are also offered with three Consultant Gynaecologists who are accredited as menopause specialists by the British Menopause Society. Delivered virtually and in person from Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor Hospital, these clinics offer specialist advice to patients from across North Wales who have more complex needs. Our menopause specialists also deliver regular e-advice sessions to promote menopause awareness amongst primary care healthcare professionals. Again this is not North Wales, again these clinics need to be central to North Wales, not on the English border. Why can one of these clinics not be set up in Ysbyty Gwynedd, it would not cost much to have a clinic in Bangor YG once a week and will save money travel, time off work, child care costs and care costs etc for the patients who need to access them. Wrexham is not central to North Wales patients, why cannot one consultant have a clinic in Bangor?

Six of our consultants are currently undertaking the British Menopause Society's menopause training, which will further strengthen our ability to provide specialist menopause advice closer to home for women across North Wales. This is brilliant news, will this allow for a clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd which is central for North Wales Women?, by when will these consultants be fully trained?

We are taking a number of actions to expand and sustain our ability to support this patient group, including training and education for our medical and nursing colleagues in both primary and secondary care, as well as education for women via webinars and teaching sessions. Job plans for the menopause specialists are currently being reviewed, to provide additional physical and virtual capacity across North Wales. This is brilliant news but not all women want virtual they need face to

face, the consultant needs to be nearer to the patient so less travel and disruption for the patient. How many virtual consultations have they done? What was the feedback from patients? Women need the choice and sometimes face to face is a must, virtual does not "show" how the women really is feeling, it's doesn't give the human touch which is so needed with the Menopause

Consideration is also being given to a pilot of virtual sessions with GPs, in order to review their cases and provide them with specialist advice without the need for referral into secondary care. I'm not sure what she means to pilot a virtual session? Does this mean training for GPs?

In the short-term, to increase capacity we are introducing the concept of 'Menopause Super Clinics', which include one of our menopause specialists working alongside two consultants who are currently in training. Based where? Bangor?

Turning to your question about the Welsh language, I can confirm that the service is currently undertaking a monitoring exercise to establish compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, working closely with the Health Board's Welsh Language Team. Part of this work relates to processes for establishing patients' preferred language, and understanding the language skills of staff within the service, in order to match Welsh speaking patients with a Welsh speaking health professional. If an individual required an appointment through the medium of Welsh, and a Welsh speaking health professional was not available, the Welsh Language Team would be contacted to provide simultaneous translation for the appointment. Outside office hours, the Health Board has a contract with 'The Big Word', who provide simultaneous translation services. How are they monitoring? I have never been asked what language I would prefer, I have been very lucky that there has always been a Welsh speaking nurse present at my appointments

We fully recognise the important role that patient feedback can play in informing service improvements. Feedback is collected on a regular basis from women who attend for face-to-face consultations and we have recently adapted our feedback forms to make it easier to identify menopause related responses. Please can we see the stats and evidence of this feedback where is it published? Can I please see the feedback form as I have never been asked?

Meanwhile, we have a collection of very-specific feedback from specialist clinics which is extremely positive, although delays in receiving consultation understandably remains a cause for concern. Please can we see the stats and result of this collection of feedback, as we have over 2,000 and more response as to why this service is needed in Ysbyty Gwynedd not Deeside Hospital and Wrexham Maelor, the Facebook pages alone have hundreds of women's feedback struggling to get to these hospitals appointments and some cancel as they cannot to afford to attend due to travel cost, time family commitment etc

I hope that this response provides some reassurance about the Health Board's commitment to provide accessible, high-quality menopause services across North Wales. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me again. This response is a start but it is far from helping women of North Wales to receive a service closer to them. What is being asking for does not require funding, it's a car or train journey once a week or more to Bangor from Wrexham by a consultant

As the petition asked:

**Women of North Wales have the right to have a Menopause Services/Clinic in Ysbyty Gwynedd**

- Not everyone can afford to travel to Wrexham.
- Not everyone can afford to pay privately to go to a Menopause clinic.
- Not everyone has the time to go to Wrexham, maybe they care for children and family members etc.
- Everyone should have the choice.
- This should be on our doorstep in Ysbyty Gwynedd with more specialist services local to North Wales including regularly updates for GP's, Gynaecologists, practitioners and employers supporting them on Menopause and the benefits of HRT.

The health board expect women to travel to the nearest NHS menopause clinic in Wrexham, as they are cutting back the little support we have in Ysbyty Gwynedd, this is not acceptable and especially in the current financial crisis.

We need resource on our doorstep local to us; the health board do not meet the demands of women suffering the ordeal, misery, pain, and discomfort along with all the other symptoms of the Menopause and the impact on their family.

Welsh Government must invest more in menopause resources and services in Wales.

Women are struggling to stay in their employment, along with sometimes having caring responsibilities. Women leave work as they cannot cope with the some of the symptoms.

I would like to thank the Senedd Committee for giving the women of North Wales the opportunity to have our voice heard and listened to, we are truly grateful, hopefully we have manage a little ripple which will make a change for us, and to bring a clinic closer to us , diolch enfawr

Diolch a Cofion

Delyth Sir Fôn

I have had a look over the plan; It is a very ambitious plan which I feel needs to be tailored to an easy read format for all to read and understand.

[https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/what-easy-read?psafe\\_param=1&gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI2pChnb7yigMVWpFQBh2nYgULEAAYAiAAEgLvfd\\_BwE](https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/what-easy-read?psafe_param=1&gad_source=1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI2pChnb7yigMVWpFQBh2nYgULEAAYAiAAEgLvfd_BwE)

There are some great opportunities here, but we need to make sure the funding doesn't get wasted and it is used at grass roots for the service user. It states there will be a task and finish group to build on the discovery report, who will coordinate this piece of work and where? How will they make sure women will be heard and listen to and be able to participate? E.g. I am aware that men discuss in their work place about their partners Menopause and support each other, who will capture this? What about women who have a disability, those with awful anxiety, isolated and lonely people?..... If

there is going to be a Task and Finish group it has to be done right and have a blanket cover not just Tokenistic

This plan needs to be Jargon free, people need to understand it , we need an easy read version

### Women's Health Plan for Wales launched to close the gender health gap

The plan, created by the National Strategic Clinical Network for Women's Health, part of the NHS Wales Executive, sets out how NHS organisations in Wales will close the gender health gap by providing better health services for women, ensuring they are listened to and their health needs are understood.

Where did these stats come from? Which areas

It includes nearly 60 actions across eight priority areas to improve healthcare for women throughout their lifetime, based on feedback from around 4,000 women across Wales. Is the feedback available to read from these 4,000 women?

As part of the plan, £750,000 will be spent on research for women's health conditions and women's health hubs will be set up in every part of Wales by 2026. where will these hubs be and why?

It also includes a commitment to 'Make Every Contact Count' to encourage doctors to ask women about menstrual health and menopause as part of existing appointments. This is good news

"Women's health is more than gynaecology and maternal health. I want this plan to be the start of better care for women – I want women's voices to be heard and their experiences to be recognised. It will mean women's symptoms, whatever their condition, will no longer be overlooked or dismissed." Words are great.....let's see the action

The plan, which will be added to over time, includes:

- Menstrual Health – Create specialist women's health hubs in each health board to help diagnose menstrual health conditions, increase research and develop further educational materials for everyone, including boys and men. Brilliant as we need to talk about Andropause
- Endometriosis and Adenomyosis – Provide further training of endometriosis as a chronic condition and education as part of the curriculum.
- Contraception, Post-Natal Contraception and Abortion Care – Increase online reliable information, collect further data and improve training for use of contraception such as the coil and other methods it's just not the Coil
- Preconception Health – Each health board to have a strategy on helping people to conceive, provide further training and take into account risks including mental health, epilepsy and type 2 diabetes.
- Pelvic Health and Incontinence – Improve access to online information, , engage with universities on new research and develop a pelvic floor dysfunction symptom checker.
- Menopause – Review all prescribing practices relating to HRT, develop community menopause champions and undertake research.
- Violence against Women and Girls – NHS Wales to sign up to a 'sexual safety in healthcare organisations' charter, consider VAWDASV champions in each health board and further education for all healthcare workers.

- Ageing Well and Long-Term Conditions Across the Life Course – Empower women to manage their own health needs, understand the ageing process and take preventative

# Agenda Item 3.5

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

This petition was submitted by Non Angharad Williams, having collected a total of 86 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

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

### **Additional Information:**

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

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales

**Ken Skates AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1258  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/10691/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

26 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October regarding Petition P-06-1258 - Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge.

As the Petitions Committee is aware, Welsh Government officials tried to procure this work in 2022, unfortunately no tenders were received. However, I am pleased to say that an internal research programme has been undertaking since autumn 2023 and the final report is due to be published in February 2025.

Yours sincerely

**Ken Skates AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Ken.Skates@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.

# Agenda Item 3.6

## **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  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y  
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1387  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/10436/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

29 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 22 November, in which you referenced petition P-06-1387 in relation to providing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The Disasters Emergency Committee Cymru (DEC Cymru) launched the DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal on Thursday 17 October. On the day of the launch, the Welsh Government was pleased to make a £100,000 donation to the appeal which will provide humanitarian support to people in Gaza, Lebanon and the wider region who are right now in urgent need of food, shelter and medical care. To date, more than £1.7 million has been donated by the people of Wales to this appeal.

The Welsh Government remains deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Too many innocent lives are being lost while this war continues. Whilst foreign policy is not devolved, the Welsh Government has repeatedly called for humanitarian pauses, as well as supporting calls for a ceasefire. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice reiterated these views on 01 May 2024 and the Welsh Government continues to focus on supporting the wellbeing of our Jewish and Muslim communities.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[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.

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.

In the longer term, officials are building links with healthcare workers and Welsh groups which have been active in the field of humanitarian and medical aid in the region with a view to bringing forward proposals for a coordinated Welsh response in the event of a permanent ceasefire.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first letter 'J'.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

# Agenda Item 3.7

**P-06-1425 We ask the Welsh Government to reverse its decision to stop T2 buses calling at Garndolbenmaen.**

This petition was submitted by Steven Churchman, having collected 282 signatures online and 139 signatures on paper, making for a total of 421 signatures.

## **Text of Petition:**

On 5th November 2023 a new bus timetable was introduced by the Welsh Government and all the T2 buses which pass through Garndolbenmaen were withdrawn and T2 buses are by-passing the village.

The ability of people in Garndolbenmaen to travel to work, to school or to hospital appointments will be all but impossible.

There has been no consultation whatsoever with the people of Garndolbenmaen on these changes to the T2 bus service.

## **Additional details:**

Most of these problems could be resolved with virtually no extra cost if the T2 service was retained to Garndolbenmaen. This would require only an extra 8 minute detour (less than two extra miles) if all the T2 buses were to continue to call at Garndolbenmaen. The minor extra expenditure would be mitigated by the avoidance of public expenditure on paying for taxi fares for school students and those people on low incomes who travel to Ysbyty Gwynedd for appointments. It would also restore a useful bus service between Garndolbenmaen and Cricieth which is now included in the new T2 bus route.

This practical proposal to resolve the problem has already been suggested by local councillor Steve Churchman, and it would be helpful if others would also support this campaign for the T2 service to be retained for the people of Garndolbenmaen.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1425  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/10620/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

26 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October regarding Petition P-06-1425: We ask the Welsh Government to reverse its decision to stop T2 buses calling at Garndolbenmaen.

We appreciate the comments made in the petition and they have been noted.

Transport for Wales have now assumed responsibility for managing the service contract for the TrawsCymru T2 service which links Bangor to Aberystwyth. When Transport for Wales re-tendered the service last year, they agreed with Gwynedd Council that the T2 service would be to re-routed to serve Criccieth rather than Garnolbenmaen. This decision to re-route the T2 service via Criccieth was made to reinstate an important direct regular bus service between Criccieth and Caernarfon / Bangor which was severed several years ago. Prior to this change Criccieth was linked to Caernarfon by a very limited 1R bus service which only operated at certain times of the day. The T2 service now picks up approximately 40 passengers per day in Criccieth.

At the same time, Gwynedd Council introduced the new T22 bus service which links Caernarfon – Porthmadog – Blaenau Ffestioniog, and this service was routed via Garnolbenmaen. The T22 is designed to connect with frequent onward bus connections at Caernarfon and the T2 service at Porthmadog for onward connections. Transport for Wales have confirmed to us that there are on average 8 passengers per day boarding and alighting the T22 service in Garnolbenmaen following the changes, compared to 10 passengers per day on average boarding the T2 service when it used to operate through the village.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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[Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Ken.Skates@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.

Transport for Wales have assured us that passenger numbers have grown steadily on both routes and that they, nor Gwynedd Council, have any immediate plans to make any changes to the services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', written in a cursive style.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

**Y Cyngorydd / Councillor**  
**Stephen William Churchman**  
**Ward - Dolbenmaen**



**Date:**  
**My Ref:**  
**Your Ref:**

Dear Petition Committee Members,

**Petition P-06-1425: RE T2 Bus Services**

In response to the letter from the Minister, I would like to make the following observations:

- Reference is made to the falling number of passengers since the introduction of the replacement T22 service through Garn. I would respectfully point out that having lost the early morning services, the evening services and the Sunday service, this is of little surprise. Some residents have been unable to get to work, or get home from work using public transport since these changes and have had no alternative, but to seek transport to work by other means.
- The Minister states that neither TfW nor Cyngor Gwynedd have assured the Senedd that they have any immediate plans to make any service changes. In the little time I have had to confirm this, staff at Cyngor Gwynedd have said they are unaware of any consultation on this matter.
- Following an invitation to a consultation meeting via Zoom with representatives from The Senedd, TfW and Cyngor Gwynedd in early February, I am awaiting confirmation of the date and time.
- The Petition offers two alternatives to resolve the loss of the service as presented to the Petition Committee in September. The first and preferred option is to “swap” the T2 and T22 services utilising the T22 as the link to the strategic route for Criccieth and rerouting the T2 through Penmorfa and Garndolbenmaen thus reconnecting these communities with the strategic route as was always the case until the recent changes. The second option is to leave the T22 as it is now and route the T2 service through Garndolbenmaen Via Glandwyfach, thus the northbound journey becomes Porthmadog, Criccieth Glandwyfach, Garndolbenmaen, Glandwyfach and back to the existing route. The southbound being simply the reverse order. This adds a few minutes to the journey yet satisfies nearly all affected communities except Penmorfa.

I would respectfully request that consideration is given to making alterations to the service(s) in order to satisfy the wishes of the affected communities and look forward o your responses.

Kind regards,

Cyngorydd Stephen W Churchman

Minffordd House  
Garndolbenmaen  
Gwynedd  
LL51 9TX  
Ffon/Tel 01766 530661  
Symudol/Mobile 07511 686480

# Agenda Item 3.8

## **P-06-1439 Improve vital late night public transport infrastructure in South and South West Wales**

This petition was submitted by Lisa Mart, having collected a total of 8,226 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Grassroots music venues operate within shoestring budgets despite providing vital platforms for emerging talent. Music Venue Trust has warned that approximately 10% of GMVs will close by the end of 2023.

Due to a lack of vital late night travel links, audiences are being stopped from attending venues that they would otherwise actively support.

Welsh Government must act to improve vital late night travel links and ensure that grassroots culture is accessible and protected for years to come.

### **Additional Information:**

Open letter to Welsh Government – <http://www.swansea-arena.co.uk/an-open-letter-to-welsh-government>

Welsh Government Analysis of 10 Questions that form the basis of "Welcome to Wales: Priorities for the visitor economy 2020 to 2025: summary";

[https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/sites/tourism/files/documents/10-Questions\\_Response-Analysis-Report\\_2020-01-22\\_English.pdf](https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/sites/tourism/files/documents/10-Questions_Response-Analysis-Report_2020-01-22_English.pdf)

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Swansea West
- South Wales West



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1439  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/10621/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

12 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-06-1439: Improve vital late night public transport infrastructure in South and South-West Wales.

I appreciate the concerns raised by the petition and value the Committee's consideration of this important matter.

We are committed to improving the public transport system in Wales and understand its importance to the economy, tourism and communities. I am pleased that Transport for Wales were able to introduce later and more frequent rail services on the Core Valley Lines in south Wales this summer. These improvements will be supported by the roll-out of brand-new trains right across Wales, boosting capacity and improving the journey experience for passengers travelling to and from events. But there is more that we would like to be able to do, including in South West Wales.

However, this is a complex matter and there are currently constraints in place across the rail and bus network in Wales which limits the Welsh Government's ability to make changes. Bus franchising will enable Transport for Wales to work with local authorities and bus operators to design a new bus network and timetable to best support the needs of local communities – including the grassroots music economy in Swansea and surrounding areas.

The Welsh Government continues to work closely with music venues through Creative Wales and we have engaged with the sector directly through regular advisory group meetings. Furthermore, we have empowered local authorities to develop Regional Transport Plans, ensuring that each region has an active role in shaping how its specific transport needs can be best met.

We will continue to work with Transport for Wales, local authorities and stakeholders to improve the public transport system in Wales.

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[Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales)

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

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

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

# Agenda Item 3.9

## **P-06-1454 Calling Welsh Government to provide urgent mental health support for New Dads**

This petition was submitted by Mark Williams, having collected a total of 295 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Fathers with perinatal mental health problems are up to 47% more likely the risk to be rated as a suicide risk than at any other time in their lives (Quevedo et al, 2010).

New research also shows that a new father has a 22% risk of anxiety and depression during the perinatal period. Birth Trauma effects at least 30,000 women in the UK and fathers are witnessing the trauma and not getting help for PTSD. Fathers also go through baby loss and need to support the baby on neonatal wards.

We want the Welsh Government to set up support for fathers in perinatal mental health teams across Wales. We also want fathers to receive support with finance up to six weeks.

### **Additional Information:**

There is a report that is coming out on birth trauma that I am part of with Theo Clarke MP on fathers and birth trauma. Please look at Fathers Reaching Out – Why Dads Matter in 2020 with all the recommendations for better supporting fathers. Supporting all new parents for their mental health has far better outcomes for the whole family, including the baby. If we don't include fathers we are at risk of mothers being effected, Adverse Child Experience (ACEs), Substance Abuse, Relationship Breakdowns, Crisis in other services and not getting to the root cause. One of the biggest killers in men is suicide and with the high risk in new fathers this is urgent. Paternal Mental Health is one of the leading causes of suicide, but we don't screen and support fathers in 2024.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ogmore

- South Wales West

Sarah Murphy AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1454  
Ein cyf/Our ref SM/10182/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

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

20 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October about Petition P-06-1454: Calling Welsh Government to provide urgent mental health support for new dads.

I can confirm the strategic mental health programme in the NHS Executive is working with a higher trainee in psychiatry, employed by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's perinatal team, to develop a pathway to support dads and partners of individuals under the care of the specialist perinatal mental health team.

Once developed, it is intended this will be rolled out to all specialist perinatal mental health teams. The best practice guide, referenced in earlier correspondence, is still under development but will be informed by this work.

In relation to the development of the [mental health and wellbeing strategy](#) and [suicide and self-harm prevention strategy](#), we have published the consultation summaries. Officials are currently working on the final strategies and associated delivery plans, with a view to publishing in the new year.

Yours sincerely,

**Sarah Murphy AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

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[Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@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.

**Back Page 166**  
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-06-1454: Calling Welsh Government to provide urgent mental health support for new dads – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 08 January 2025**

Dear Petitions Committee Thank you for your efforts on the petition committee; I truly appreciate your hard work. I would like to share the following:

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Huw Irica-Davies for his unwavering support since I began this campaign 15 years ago. I also appreciate Sarah Murphy for her relentless persistence over the years, engaging with various ministers despite the challenges we faced, and Jack Sergent for his contributions as well.

Regarding the campaign and the recent developments, I am thrilled about the new pathways for fathers and partners; this is incredible news, and I am grateful that it is now formally acknowledged. Having been part of the perinatal mental health steering group in the past, I had my doubts about this progress occurring anytime soon, so it's truly encouraging to see this change.

I believe it's essential to see more literature and information available for mental health charities focusing on paternal mental health. It's important that fathers, just like mothers, receive the support they need to ensure they are not overlooked in the future. Raising awareness and providing resources specifically for paternal mental health can help address this gap and promote better overall mental well-being for families.

This need for greater awareness and resources for paternal mental health has become increasingly evident, especially following recent work with Samaritans Cymru last year. Collaborating with them highlighted the importance of ensuring that fathers receive the necessary support, just as mothers have traditionally been supported. It's crucial that mental health charities expand their focus to include literature and resources that address the unique challenges faced by fathers.

I would like to share any recommendations that could be beneficial, along with relevant evidence and research. Additionally, I want to provide insights into pathways surrounding birth trauma.

Thank you so much and consider the petition successful. After spending many years highlighting the importance of paternal mental health with success in other countries, I have often felt overlooked in my own. I am now thrilled to see that Wales is beginning to catch up with the progress made elsewhere.

I am optimistic about the future for families in Wales. Thanks again,

Mark

# Agenda Item 3.10

## **P-06-1452 Meat-free Monday in every school in Wales**

This petition was submitted by Manon Rebeca, having collected a total of 271 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We are calling for the following: Meat-free Monday in every school in Wales for environmental reasons, and for the welfare of animals.

It reduces your carbon footprint and saves the lives of animals. Additionally, it takes 2,350 litres of water to create one beef burger, so this will save a load of water.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Lynne Neagle AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1452  
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/10326/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

25 November 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 October 2024 requesting details on the timetable for reviewing the Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations, and for information on local authorities in Wales that are already offering meat-free days.

On 17 September, during my Oral Statement on Universal Primary Free School Meals, I set out the timetable to review of the Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations. The transcript of my statement can be found here: [Plenary 17/09/2024 - Welsh Parliament](#). In summary, I explained a public consultation is being developed for spring 2025 with the ambition the revised Regulations will be made and laid before the Senedd in January 2026.

Separately, local authorities and schools have discretion to design their own menus and are encouraged to work closely with partners, parents and learners to ensure they are appealing and inclusive as well as compliant with the healthy eating regulations. School menus are available on local authority websites, and can be used to identify meat free days. If it's helpful as an example, Cardiff Council have a meat free Monday - their primary school menu can be found here: [Primary School Menu](#).

Yours sincerely

**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

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

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

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

**P-06-1452 Meat-free Monday in every school in Wales - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS and members of the petitions committee,

Thanks for the letter, I was pleased to hear that some local authorities are already doing a meat-free Monday. I'd like to see more of this in the future. Is it possible to do this at a national level as the petition asked for instead of leaving it to local authorities?

I don't think the letter quite addresses the issues in my neighborhood. During the debate on 17 September meatless Monday wasn't allowed to talk about.

Research has shown that meat-free Mondays are healthy and can help with people's health and make lives longer.

Can revised regulations on reviewing healthy eating regulations in schools take into account the research into meatless Mondays?

Thanks again for the letter,

Yours sincerely

Manon Thompson

# Agenda Item 3.11

## **P-06-1474 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin & Ynyslas visitor centres**

This petition was submitted by Gareth Jones, having collected a total of 13,245 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Closure of these centres runs contrary to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

The closure of these visitor centres would have a far-reaching negative impact on the local economy, environment, and community well-being.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

# Agenda Item 3.12

## **P-05-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve**

This petition was submitted by Kim Williams, having collected 2,422 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

It has come to the attention of the local community that NRW are planning to close the Visitor Centre at Ynyslas at the end of this year. This is taking place with no consultation, no provision of alternative protection for the nature reserve and the loss of local jobs.

NRW is the organisation that should be protecting our wildlife and communities not destroying them.

### **Additional details:**

The visitor centre at Ynyslas is critical in managing the 400,000 visitors a year that use the site. The wildlife and the habitats of the nature reserve are fragile and need protecting from this large number of visitors, vehicles and dogs if we are to avoid further biodiversity loss in Wales.

The year round presence of NRW staff at the reserve mean that there is a natural deterrent to antisocial behaviour (lighting of fires, fly tipping, vehicle access) and that any incidents that do occur are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The centre provides information and education to all visitor so that they understand why the place is special and what impacts their actions have on it. It is also a place of social contact for the local community and is a place where nature is accessible to those with limited mobility.

Effective visitor management at Ynyslas is essential for the protection of the Nature Reserve and its wildlife.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros  
Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate  
Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1474/1447  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/10614/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petitions P-06-1474 and P-06-1447 and the future of Natural Resources Wales' visitor centres.

I am pleased to inform you that visitor centre provisions will remain in place until the 31 March 2025 whilst activity gets underway, at pace, in engaging with the community and prospective partners. This will allow Natural Resources Wales the time to arrange interim measures at each site ready for the start of the new financial year. These measures include a concession contract for a coffee cart at each site, ice cream concession for the summer months and continuation of other contracts such as grounds maintenance.

You may be aware that Natural Resources Wales recently hosted three public engagement sessions to update local communities. These took place for Ynyslas (Borth Community Hall, High Street, Borth, SY24 5LH on Monday, 25 November, 7pm), Bwlch Nant yr Arian (Neuadd Penllwyn Capel Bangor, Aberystwyth, SY23 3LS on Tuesday, 26 November, 6:30pm) and Coed y Brenin (Ganllwyd Village Hall, Llanfar, Y Llai, Ganllwyd, LL40 2TF on Wednesday, 27 November, 6:30pm).

Following the meeting on 25 November, Natural Resources Wales opened a community expression of interest for four weeks to allow members of the public to propose ways they can use the space at Ynyslas. Ynyslas is in a unique position as it sits within a nature reserve and has very specific, statutory needs and requirements so will be offered as a limited, community opportunity for "use of space".

The proposal for Nant yr Arian and Coed Y Brenin needs further development and consideration before being offered to open market following public service procurement guidelines. Natural Resources Wales aspires to enhance the visitor centre provision to help support tourism and serve the needs of local communities. Natural Resources Wales is considering whether there is scope to increase the value

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

**Back Page 174**  
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.

of the visitor centres for users and whether extending the offer beyond retail and catering will provide additional attraction to the tourism industry.

I hope you find this information useful and thank you, again, for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Huw Irranca-Davies', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Your Ref: P-06-1447 and P-06-1474  
Our Ref: CX24-130 and CX24-154

Gareth Price  
Petitions Committee Clerk  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

By email only: [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

2 January 2025

Dear Gareth,

**P-06-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve**

**P-06-1474 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin & Ynyslas visitor centres**

On 31 July 2024, NRW launched a consultation with our Trade Unions that looked across our remit at ways of making a minimum saving of £13 million, while simultaneously focusing on priority areas in keeping with our Corporate Plan. Among the proposals we considered was whether we should continue to operate catering and retail provision at our Visitor Centres at Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin and Ynyslas.

At the Board meeting on 5 November, our Board agreed to implement the Case for Change. We are now in position to provide the Petitions Committee with an update as promised in our earlier response letters, dated 14 August and 30 September.

We appreciate the strength of public feeling regarding the Visitor Centres and that the decision to stop these services will be disappointing to many. Catering and retail services at all three sites – Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin and Ynyslas – will remain open until 31 March 2025, after which they will close. The sites will continue to be open for recreation access, such as walking and biking and services such as play areas, car parking and toilet provision will also remain available.

We would also like to clarify that our Visitor Centre staff are not responsible for managing the land in and around the centres. This is the responsibility of our land management teams. Therefore, there will be no change to trail and access management nor the maintenance and management of wildlife and the natural environment.

Our priority is finding partners who can work with us to make Bwlch Nant yr Arian and Coed y Brenin thriving hubs with a long-term sustainable future. Ensuring that we find the

right partner for the right site is essential, but we do need time to make sure that we are delivering the greatest value for users, local businesses and communities.

In the meantime, we are exploring temporary solutions to minimise disruption and continue providing valued services to visitors.

Of the three sites, Ynyslas is unique as it forms part of the Dyfi National Nature Reserve (NNR) and as such has specific statutory needs and requirements, of which protecting the NNR is priority. This will include retaining an onsite office for land management staff. Ynyslas Visitor Centre will therefore not be offered commercially and will be solely put forward for community use via Expressions of Interest. Those who have registered an interest in Ynyslas have been contacted by email to advise the Expression of Interest process is open and that the application form is available to download via the [Consultation Hub](#) on our website.

We've already received interest in both Coed y Brenin and Bwlch Nant yr Arian. However, to ensure fairness and parity, no proposals are being considered in advance of the public tender exercise that will begin in 2025. The process will be conducted via the Sell2Wales website and those interested can register on the platform in advance of any process starting. We will provide more details of this process, including the start date, in due course.

Details of those who have already contacted us have been added to a mailing list of interested parties, so they will receive details of the tendering process when available.

Although the public tender exercise has not started, we have been meeting interested parties informally and have arranged drop-in sessions for each site, the details of which are available on the Consultation Hub. To confirm, no formal discussions have taken place. All meetings have been informal and tentative to help identify whether the tender is right for them.

The public engagement sessions for each of our sites to update members of the community and stakeholders on the future of Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Ynyslas and Coed y Brenin visitor centres were held towards the end of November. These were well attended and gave us the important opportunity to provide up-to-date information on the changes to retail and catering at our Visitor Centres, and answer specific questions and concerns from the public.

Following on from these we have produced a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) which will be available for the public to view online via our Consultation Hub. We will continue to update the FAQs as we work through the impact of the Case for Change on Visitor Centres. Any questions or queries can also be directed to a dedicated mailbox [ymgysylltu.masnachol@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:ymgysylltu.masnachol@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk).

We trust this assists and will be happy to respond to any further queries about the Visitor Centres.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ceri Davies', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Ceri Davies**

Prif Swyddog Gweithredol Dros Do  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi.  
Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.

**P-06-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13 January 2025**

Dear Petitions Committee

I would just like to say that this letter to Carolyn Thomas from the Deputy First Minister does not address the issues that we raised in any way.

We were never concerned about the provision of coffee and ice creams at Ynyslas and always about the conservation and safety work that the Visitor Centre staff undertook. The idea that NRW has a fantastic education and visitor destination on the reserve that will not be open to the public is shameful. Rather than using what they have, they are proposing to bring more traffic to the site in the form of a third party coffee cart.

Will the coffee cart staff collect the dog poo or warn visitors not to swim at the red flag beach? Will the current contractors (I assume the Minister means the people who clean the loos) put out the high tide warning signs or plover lines?

NRW keep saying that the Visitor Centre staff are retail and catering but this is not true. My husband was a temporary team member in the summer season and he did between 8,000 and 12,000. It would be impossible to do that number of steps while standing behind a counter without a treadmill (which he did not have).

I am dismayed to read that "Natural Resources Wales is considering whether there is scope to increase the value of the visitor centres for users and whether extending the offer beyond retail and catering will provide additional attraction to the tourism industry" when this is what we already have at Ynyslas. NRW appear to be throwing out the baby with the bathwater and wasting thousands of pounds of taxpayers money to boot.

Again, I have reached the point of not knowing what else to say as no one other than members of the Petitions Committee is listening or willing to try to understand the issues.

Other members of our team will almost certainly send separate emails to you.

Kind regards

Polly Ernest

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# Agenda Item 3.13

**P-06-1464 Allow Welsh families who have experienced Baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain baby loss certificate**

This petition was submitted by Angharad Cousins, having collected a total of 749 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

The UK government have introduced baby loss certificates for families in England who have lost babies prior to 24 weeks. This doesn't apply to Welsh families. Let's get this changed!!

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1464  
Ein cyf/Our ref SM/10279/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

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

12 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

**Petition P-06-1464 Allow Welsh families who have experienced Baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain baby loss certificate**

Thank you for your letter of 22 November regarding the above petition.

We want everyone in Wales who has been bereaved to know support is available to them, and we are working on a number of initiatives to improve access to bereavement support for children, young people and adults in Wales.

Following the UK Government's launch of the voluntary scheme to enable parents whose baby died before 24 weeks of pregnancy to apply for a free certificate to provide recognition of their loss, agreement was made in principle with the then Minister for Health and Social Care and the previous Secretary of State for Health and Social services to extend the scheme to Wales. Unfortunately, discussions were paused in the lead up to and during the General Election period.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care has written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care seeking his support to consider how best the scheme can be extended to Wales without further delay. I have also met with my UK counterpart Baroness Merron, where we discussed the extension of the baby loss certificate scheme into Wales. I am pleased to advise that discussions between UK Government and my officials have reconvened, and work is underway to extend the scheme into Wales.

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

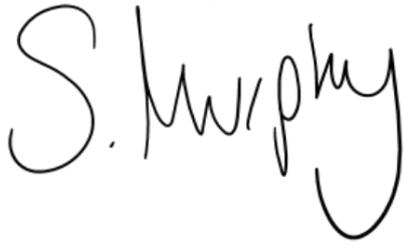
Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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[Gohebiaeth.Sarah.Murphy@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Sarah.Murphy@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales)

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

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Sarah Murphy AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: TP

Dyddiad / Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Tim Peppin

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: 07747 483761

Ebost / Email: [tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk)

Chair – Petitions Committee

Senedd Cymru

Cardiff Bay

Cardiff CF99 1SN

Dear Chair

## **Petition P-06-1380 Make Blue badge Applications Lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis**

Thank-you for your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> July regarding the above petition. I apologise for the delay in responding but officers have been trying to gather information to provide responses to the questions raised.

Whilst there are published statistics on blue badges in England (e.g. [Blue Badge scheme statistics: data tables \(DIS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/blue-badge-scheme-statistics-data-tables-dis)) we are unaware of a similar publication for Wales. WLGA officers consulted Data Cymru on this and they are investigating with the Welsh Government. If they come back with any further information, we will let you know.

The Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) provides a web-based Management Information System for all councils. Via the BBDS it is possible to access details on Blue Badge holders from anywhere in Great Britain. However, WLGA does not have access to the BBDS and it is unclear if aggregated data are extracted from that system and published anywhere for Wales.

In light of the above comments, a brief response to each of the four points you raise is provided below.

(1) Data on how many individuals currently hold a lifelong badge in each local authority and are not required to undergo the full renewal process every 3 years.

As there is a requirement to renew badges every three years, we do not believe there to be any lifelong badges, subject to the comments made in response to Q2 below. Individual councils may be able to clarify if there are any local arrangements in place, but WLGA does not collect or collate information on the scheme. Unless Welsh Government does, we are not aware of this being held in one place so each council would need to be asked.

(2) Is there a simplified process for lifelong renewal in every local authority?

All council websites contain information on the blue badge scheme and how to apply. This can be done online or in person. At present, in line with Welsh Government's published guidance on eligibility ([Blue Badges: eligibility \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)), an application must be made every three years (and 12 weeks before the current badge expires). However, **automatic qualification** may be possible without the need for an assessment if the following can be evidenced:

1. A current, qualifying benefit letter from DWP dated within the last 12 months. This can be a full PIP entitlement letter with the points section, or a DLA high-rate mobility letter. Other evidence can include a relevant award letter from the Ministry of Defence (e.g. regarding Permanent Mental Disorder) and evidence of being 'registered blind' or having 'severe sight impairment'
2. Proof of address
3. Proof of ID.

(3) Are there any common or shared training schemes?

Welsh Government has run training and circulated information for councils on blue badges in the past when changes have been introduced. There was also guidance on blue badge use during the Covid pandemic. More recently training sessions have been run in relation to blue badge enforcement issues.

(4) Any all-Wales forum or network to share and develop good practice?

There are various networks of officers in local government that help to share good practice and that can include joint training initiatives. Blue badges are dealt with by different departments in different councils (e.g. social services; highways; customer service centres). That can make it difficult to identify the best network to share information on blue badges. Increasingly, though, the badges are dealt with by

public facing customer care centres, one stop shops or community hubs that have been established by councils. There is a Customer Contact group which may cover blue badges as part of their networking activity.

I hope that response is helpful. If we pick up additional information on the above points I have asked WLGA officials to forward it to you.

Yours faithfully,



**Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE**  
WLGA Leader and Transport Spokesperson

# Agenda Item 4.2

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

**Date: Tuesday 3 December 2024**

**Subject: Wales Participation in the ESC**

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

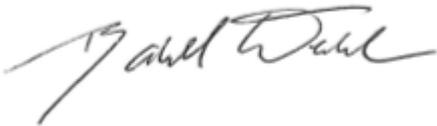
Thank you for your letter seeking further information on the process to participate in the Eurovision Song Contest.

Participation in the Eurovision Song Contest, and other Eurovision live events, is limited to public broadcasters which are members of the European Broadcasting Union. While S4C in Wales is a valued member of the EBU and has taken part twice in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest and once in Eurovision Choir, the BBC has taken part in the Eurovision Song Contest since 1957 and represents the whole of the United Kingdom at the event. As the BBC continues to participate, and remains the rights holder in the United Kingdom, this means an entry from the individual nations of the UK is therefore not possible at the Eurovision Song Contest.

Should you have any questions, I remain at your disposal.

Kind regards,

Bakel Walden



**Bakel Walden**

Chair of the ESC Reference Group