

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 (Ty Hywel)

Meeting date: 9 June 2025

Meeting time: 13.30

For further information contact:

Rhys Morgan

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting

(13:15–13:30)

Public meeting

(13:30–13:35)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(13:30)

2 Papers to note

(13:30–13:35)

2.1 Correspondence from the Finance Committee to the Chair regarding the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026–27 Engagement

(Pages 1 – 3)

2.2 Correspondence from Colin Murray to the Chair regarding Trans Rights

(Pages 4 – 11)

2.3 Correspondence from the Welsh Government's Gender Equality Team to the Chair regarding VAWDASV Research Network Wales

(Pages 12 – 13)

2.4 Correspondence from the Office of National Statistics to the Chair regarding new ways on which data is being collected in relation to women suffering from domestic abuse

(Page 14)



- 2.5 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act**
(Page 15)
- 2.6 Correspondence from the Chair to the Petitions Committee regarding a petition seeking a fair deal for residents affected by the ARBED and CESP scheme**
(Page 16)
- 2.7 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the Welsh Government response to the Committee's report on tackling Fuel Poverty in Wales**
(Pages 17 – 30)
- 2.8 Correspondence from the Health and Social Care Committee to the Chair regarding the cancellation of scrutiny sessions concerning prisons and the Criminal Justice System in Wales**
(Page 31)
- 2.9 Correspondence from the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee to the Chair regarding the implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**
(Pages 32 – 33)
- 2.10 Correspondence from the Minister for Social Security and Disability to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding the Equality and Social Justice Committee's recent report entitled "Anything's achievable with the right support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap"**
(Pages 34 – 37)
- 2.11 Correspondence from the Auditor General for Wales to the Chair regarding post legislative scrutiny of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act**
(Page 38)
- 2.12 Correspondence from Mark Isherwood, MS to the Chair regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**
(Pages 39 – 40)

- 2.13 Correspondence from the Business Committee to the Chair providing a revised timetable for consideration: Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Employment Rights Bill**
(Pages 41 – 42)
- 2.14 Correspondence from Qualifications Wales to the Committee regarding post legislative scrutiny of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act**
(Page 43)
- 2.15 Correspondence from the Bevan Foundation to the Chair regarding a briefing on rebuilding the immigration legal sector**
(Pages 44 – 47)
- 3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting**
(13:35)
- 4 Social cohesion: key issues paper**
(13:35–14:35) (Pages 48 – 90)
- 5 The EU Settlement Scheme: consideration of draft report**
(14:35–14:55) (Pages 91 – 111)
- 6 Forward work plan**
(14:55–15:25) (Pages 112 – 120)

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

9 May 2025

Dear Committee Chairs,

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27: Engagement

At our meetings on 12 March and 30 April 2025, the Finance Committee (the Committee) considered its programme of engagement for the forthcoming Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026-27. I am writing to Chairs of subject committees to share our thinking. The Committee has agreed to undertake a number of engagement activities prior to the publication of the Draft Budget later this year. These include, a stakeholder event, focus groups held with the general public, and various other approaches to gather the views of young people.

Stakeholder Event: Bangor

This year's stakeholder event will take place at the Huw Owen Hall, Management Centre at Bangor University on Thursday 19 June. This will be an opportunity for the Committee to hear directly from interested organisations/individuals on the expected Draft Budget proposals, as well as their views on the Welsh Government's approach to setting the budget and prioritising resources. As cross-Committee engagement with stakeholders on the budget is crucial to effective scrutiny, I would like to invite Committee Chairs or a Member of your Committee to join the event. If Chairs or Members are interested in attending, please contact the clerking team seneddfinance@senedd.wales by 23 May.

Citizen engagement focus groups with the Welsh public

On behalf of the Committee, the Senedd's Citizens Engagement Team will be holding a series of focus groups on the Draft Budget with the Welsh public. The team has undertaken similar exercises over the past few years and the aim of this work is to form a cross-sectional study to allow the Committee to monitor perspectives and attitudes over time. Participants will be sourced through similar partner organisations to cover the same demographics as last year, and groups will be organised to focus on particular policy areas. The Citizens Engagement Team will circulate the dates of sessions to all Committees, should any Members wish to participate. In addition, there will be opportunities for individuals to share their views with Members of the Committee at the Urdd National Eisteddfod, the National Eisteddfod and at the Royal Welsh Show. This will allow an opportunity for Members to hear first-hand from the citizens of Wales where spending should be prioritised.

Youth Engagement

To further complement our engagement work, the Committee will hold a workshop with Members of the Youth Parliament (WYP). In previous years it was extremely informative to hear openly from young people about the issues concerning and directly affecting them. We are keen to continue building on this invaluable work and will be inviting the youth Members to participate in a workshop again this year.

We have also decided to invite Members of the WYP to participate in one of our Committee meetings in the Autumn term. Further details will be confirmed in due course.

Finance Committee Plenary Debate on the Welsh Government spending priorities

The Committee intends to hold a Plenary debate on Wednesday 16 July on the Welsh Government's spending priorities for 2026-27. The outcomes of our engagement work will inform and feed into this debate, which will provide the best opportunity to influence the Welsh Government spending priorities before the Draft Budget is published later in the year. As ever, we would very much welcome the participation of Committee Chairs, as well as other Members, as part of this debate, to ensure that the Welsh Government's spending plans are informed by the views and priorities of Senedd Committees.

Approach to budget scrutiny

I will shortly be writing to Chairs, with regard to the Committee's approach to budget scrutiny, including information on the consultation and timetable once the Trefnydd has notified the Business Committee of the Draft Budget publication dates before the summer recess.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the Draft Budget process, please feel free to contact me or the Clerk to the Finance Committee, Owain Roberts, 0300 200 6388, seneddfinance@senedd.wales.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 2.2

We the undersigned, as legal academics, practitioners, and members of the legal profession, write to demonstrate our solidarity for the trans community in the wake of the UK Supreme Court ruling in *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers*¹, of April 16th 2025.

We believe that transgender people, be they men, women, or non-binary people, deserve the human right to private and family life which was affirmed under Article 8 ECHR in *Goodwin v United Kingdom*² and which has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the European Court of Human Rights in numerous decisions in the past twenty years.

We believe that the law in the United Kingdom lags behind that of other jurisdictions in the recognition of transgender people, in that it forces trans men and women through arduous processes to gain a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)³, and does not grant recognition to non-binary people at all.⁴ Nevertheless, we believe that the rights that it does grant to trans persons were hard-won and should not be lightly undermined.

We find that the judgment in *Scottish Ministers* positions trans people in an indeterminate space when it comes to equalities law. The judgment defines a person's sex under the Equality Act 2010 as 'biological sex,' reaching back to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.⁵ However, for all other purposes, the acquisition of a Gender Recognition Certificate changes the legal sex of its holder to that which is stated on the GRC. The *Scottish Ministers* decision therefore leaves GRC holders in a legal paradox where they are of one sex for the purposes of everything except equalities law, where they remain of the other - hardly the clarity the Supreme Court purported to enact.

We believe that the Supreme Court, in deciding *Scottish Ministers*, failed to consider several important points of law, including:

- The UK's obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporates the rights under the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law;
- The decision in *Chief Constable of West Yorkshire v A (No 2)*⁶ wherein the House of Lords held that "the SDA 1975 used a trans-inclusive definition of sex by virtue of the Equal Treatment Directive"⁷;

¹ [2025] UKSC 16.

² (2002) 35 EHRR 18.

³ GRA 2004 ss. 1-4.

⁴ *Castellucci v Gender Recognition Panel* [2025] EWCA Civ 167.

⁵ Using the s 9(3) exemption in the GRA 2004.

⁶ [2004] UKHL 21.

⁷ C. Wigley, 'For Women Scotland: A Case of Significant Silences', U.K. Const. L. Blog (6th May 2025) (available at <https://ukconstitutionallaw.org/>)

- The meanings of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ in the Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Code of Practice as explored in *AEA v EHRC*⁸

We further affirm that the EHRC ‘interim guidance,’ as issued on 25 April 2025, is merely an opinion and does not have the force of law.

We consider the ‘interim guidance’ to go much further than the *Scottish Ministers* ruling requires in its scope and its intent to ban trans people from using the services which correspond to their true gender. We believe this is discriminatory, marginalising, and hurtful to the community, and has already caused considerable fear and distress.

We believe that forcing trans people to use services according to their sex assigned at birth breaches their right to privacy under Article 8 ECHR, and exposes them to the potential of forced outing, shaming, and even violence.

Lastly, we affirm that the trans community is an important part of society and deserves to be treated equally. We uphold their human rights. We disavow transphobia in all its forms, and we promise to be active allies to community members, interrogating our own biases and calling out transphobia when we encounter it in our profession and otherwise.

Signed,

1. Dr Sylvia de Mars, Newcastle Law School, Newcastle University
2. Professor Colin Murray, Newcastle Law School, Newcastle University
3. Dr. Sandra Duffy, Lecturer in Law, University of Bristol Law School
4. Anurag Deb, Queen's University Belfast
5. Prof Aoife O'Donoghue, Queen's University Belfast
6. Jess O'Thompson, PhD Law Student, University of Leeds
7. Prof Máiréad Enright, Professor of Feminist Legal Studies, University of Birmingham
8. Mr Conor Flannery, PhD Student, Queen's University Belfast, School of Law
9. Dr Emily Jones, Newcastle Law School, Newcastle University
10. Dr Emily Grabham, Professor of Law and Society, Loughborough University
11. Dr Elizabeth Agnew, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
12. Dr Tilly Clough, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
13. Dr James Greenwood-Reeves, School of Law, University of Leeds
14. Dr Daragh Murray, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London

⁸ *R (Authentic Equity Alliance CIC) v Equality and Human Rights Commission* [2021] EWHC 1623 (Admin).

15. Dr Sarah Zarmsky, School of Law, QUB
16. Dr Jocelyn Bosse, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
17. Dr Francesco de Cecco, Newcastle Law School, Newcastle University
18. Dr Lea Raible, School of Law, University of Glasgow
19. Sharon Cowan, Professor of Feminist and Queer Legal Studies, University of Edinburgh
20. Dr Ruth Houghton, Newcastle Law School
21. Dr Marisa McVey, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
22. Professor Charlotte O'Brien, York Law School, University of York
23. Dr Alice Welsh, York Law School, University of York
24. Dr Sarah Craig, School of Law, Ulster University
25. Dr David M Scott, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London
26. Prof. Martin Jones, Professor of International Human Rights Law, York Law School, University of York
27. Helen Flynn LLM, Human rights campaigner
28. Ciara Bartlam, barrister
29. Phil Bates, Associate Professor in Law, University of Plymouth
30. Damian Fisher, Solicitor at nplaw
31. Oscar Davies, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers
32. Johanna McDavitt, Solicitor
33. Dr Tom Flynn, Lecturer, Essex Law School
34. Dr Jess Lawrence, Senior Lecturer, Essex Law School
35. Dr Joanna Gilmore, York Law School, University of York
36. Dr Jesse Bachir, University of Birmingham Law School
37. Dr Erin Ferguson, School of Law, University of Aberdeen
38. Beth Currie, Pupil Barrister, Garden Court North Chambers
39. Dr Alan Greene, Reader in Constitutional Law and Human Rights, Birmingham Law School
40. Prof Ralf Michaels, Chair in Global Law, Queen Mary University, London
41. George Collecott, solicitor at the Global Legal Action Network (GLAN)
42. Dr Inga Thiemann, School of Law, University of Leicester
43. Dr Tara Mulqueen, School of Law, University of Warwick
44. Dr Anne Neylon, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
45. Dr Joy Twemlow, School of Law, Durham University
46. Dr Lydia Morgan, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
47. John Wadham, solicitor (not practicing)
48. Monique Bouffé, Barrister, Outer Temple Chambers
49. Brie Stevens-Hoare KC (Barrister, Gatehouse Chambers)
50. Dr Damian Gonzalez Salzberg, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
51. Dr Hayley Gibson, Lecturer in Law, University of Kent

52. Caroline Harrison KC (Barrister in independent practice)
53. Melvyna Mumunie, Solicitor
54. Professor Emeritus Phil Scraton PhD, School of Law, Queens University Belfast
55. Dr. Tara Lai Quinlan, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
56. David Faith, Legal Counsel
57. Dr Silvana Tapia Tapia, Associate Professor in Law, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
58. Oliver Edwards, Solicitor of Greater Manchester Law Centre
59. Dr Matt Howard, Lecturer in law, University of Kent
60. Dr Flora Renz, Senior Lecturer in Law, Kent Law School, University of Kent
61. Dr Kit Colliver, York Law School, University of York
62. Declan Owens, Solicitor
63. Prof Michelle Farrell, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
64. Jack Heron, Solicitor
65. Dr Eleanor Drywood, Liverpool Law School
66. Matthew Burton, Lecturer in Law, University of Bristol
67. Professor Michael Gordon, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
68. Dr Greg Davies, Law Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
69. Dr Emily Ireland, Law Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
70. Dr Alex Latham-Gambi, Birmingham Law School
71. Professor Catherine O'Rourke, Durham Law School, Durham University
72. Dr Danielle Watson, School of Law, University of Leicester
73. Ellie Fayle, Solicitor
74. Brenda Efurhievwe, Barrister at Goldsmith Chambers
75. Taylor Blair, Barrister
76. Dr Nikki Godden-Rasul, Law School, Newcastle University
77. Dr Kay Crosby, senior lecturer in law, Newcastle University
78. Dr Laura Lammasniemi, School of Law, University of Warwick
79. Dr Danielle Griffiths, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
80. Alexa Thompson, Barrister at Garden Court North
81. Dr Elizabeth Chloe Romanis, Associate Professor, Durham Law School
82. Professor Sharon Thompson, School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University
83. Dr Charlotte Bendall, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
84. Dr Ed Horowicz, Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
85. Dr Henry Jones, Associate Professor, Durham Law School
86. Dr Illan Wall, school of Law, University of Galway / University of Warwick
87. Sean Madden, PhD Candidate in Law, University of Birmingham

88. Professor Ruth Fletcher, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London
89. Dr Tina Sikka, Reader in Technoscience and Intersectional Justice, Newcastle University
90. Professor Rosemary Hunter, Loughborough Law, Loughborough University
91. Dr Chloe Wallace, School of Law, University of Leeds
92. Hamish McCallum, Barrister at Garden Court Chambers
93. Dr Elena Loizidou, Professor of Law and Political Theory, School of Law, Birkbeck College.
94. Dr Jane Rooney, Associate Professor in International Law, Durham Law School
95. Dr Jonathan Collinson, School of Law, University of Sheffield
96. Professor Nicola Barker, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
97. Dr Julie McCandless, Senior Lecturer, Kent Law School
98. Dr Magdalena Furgalska, the York Law School, University of York
99. Dr Senthoran Raj, Manchester Law School, Manchester Metropolitan University
100. Dr Dimitrios Kagiarios, Assistant Professor in Public Law and Human Rights, Durham Law School
101. Dr Ruth Brittle, Leicester Law School, University of Leicester
102. Ka Lok Yip, Solicitor (non-practising)
103. Daniel Cloney, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford
104. Chiara Cordone, Barrister at 39 Essex Chambers
105. Melissa Symes, Senior Lawyer, nplaw
106. Michael Clements, Solicitor
107. Dr Victoria McCloud, retired UK judge, legal author and legal consultant
108. Laura Jones, LLB (Hons); PG Dip (LP); LLM
109. Dr Vidya Kumar, Senior Lecturer in Law, SOAS Law School, University of London, UK
110. Professor Natasa Mavronicola, Professor of Human Rights Law, University of Birmingham
111. Meghan Campbell, Reader in International Human Rights Law, University of Birmingham
112. Dr. Robert Vardill
113. Dr Julian Scholtes, School of Law, University of Glasgow
114. Dr Mattia Pinto, Centre for Applied Human Rights & York Law School, University of York
115. Dr Brando (School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool)
116. Professor Kate Bedford, University of Birmingham
117. Dr Natalie Sedacca, Assistant Professor in Employment Law, Durham Law School
118. Marc Mason, Senior Lecturer and Barrister, University of Westminster
119. Dr Sarah Keenan, Queen Mary University of London Law School
120. Dr Rachel Hubbard (Senior Lecturer in Social Work, UWE Bristol)

121. Dr Sarah Lambie, Professor of Criminology, Birkbeck, University of London
122. David Thomas, Lecturer in Law, Brighton University
123. Jolyon Maugham KC, Founder of Good Law Project
124. Dr Mireia Garces de Marcilla, Lecturer in Law, University of Exeter
125. Dr Ronit Matar, Lecturer in Human Rights Law, School of Law, Queen Mary University London
126. Dr Kay Lalor, Reader in Human Rights Law, Manchester Metropolitan University
127. Dr. Liam Sunner, Queen's University Belfast
128. Professor Bryan Clark Law School Newcastle University
129. Dr Jessie Blackburn, Associate Professor, Durham Law School
130. Dr Joshua Jowitt, Newcastle Law School, Newcastle University
131. Eleni Methymaki, Lecturer in International Law, University of Glasgow
132. Dr Rosie Fox, School of Law, University of Leeds
133. Dr Liam Edwards, School of Law, Ulster University
134. Dr Sarah Singh, School of Law & Social Justice, University of Liverpool.
135. Dr Zoe Tongue, School of Law, University of Leeds
136. Dr Laurène Soubise, University of Leeds
137. Jessica Benton, PhD Candidate in International Criminal Law, Leeds Beckett University
138. Professor emeritus Eric Clive, Edinburgh University Law School
139. Dr Adam Tucker, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
140. Dr Daniella Lock, Lecturer in Law, King's College London
141. Prof. Ioana Cismas, York Law School, University of York
142. Caroline McLeod, Solicitor
143. Professor Marie Fox, School of Law & Social Justice, University of Liverpool
144. Dr Maja Grundler, Northumbria Law School
145. Japheth Monzon LLM (Access to Justice and Human Rights Campaigner)
146. Aoife Edith Rosa Bowdler, PhD Candidate in Law, University of Liverpool
147. Professor Jen Ang, University of Glasgow, School of Law
148. Katherine East, Solicitor at Clyde & Co LLP
149. Prof Anna Carline, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
150. Dr Jess Randall Liverpool John Moores University
151. Professor Alex Sharpe, School of Law, University of Warwick
152. Dr Lewis Graham, University of Cambridge
153. Dr Katy Vaughan, Senior Lecturer, School of Law, Swansea University
154. Dr Michael Lane, Lecturer in Law, University of Worcester
155. Alasdair Mackenzie, Barrister
156. Prof. Matthew Weait, Professor of Law and Society, University of Oxford
157. Dr Alex Powell, Principal Lecturer in Law, Oxford Brookes University
158. Ceri Lloyd-Hughes, Solicitor

159. Dave Busfield-Birch, Employment Law Supervisor, Toynbee Hall Free Legal Advice Centre
160. Robin Moira White, Barrister, Old Square Chambers
161. Professor Se-shauna Wheatle, Durham Law School, Durham University
162. Dr Jennifer Cobbe, Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge
163. Snigdha Nag, Senior Lecturer, City Law School, City St George's University of London
164. Dr Mitchell Travis, Associate Professor in Law and Social Justice, School of Law, University of Leeds
165. Dr Lena Holzer, Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge
166. Dr Marco Longobardo, School of Law, University of Westminster
167. Dr Raawiyah Rifath, Lecturer in Law, University of Exeter
168. Dr. Meghan Hoyt
169. Dr Sally Day, School of Law, Exeter University
170. Michael Passaro, PhD Law Student, Durham Law School
171. Salman Hasan, Solicitor
172. Prof Rory O'Connell, Professor of Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Ulster University
173. Mr David Morgan-Wilkins, eDiscovery Technical Lead, Norton Rose Fulbright LLP
174. Professor Louise Mallinder, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
175. Professor Colin Harvey, Queen's University Belfast
176. Andrew Kearney, Barrister at Gatehouse Chambers
177. Dr Natalie Ohana, Law School, University of Exeter
178. Dr. Elif Ceylan Ozsoy, Law School Cornwall, University of Exeter.
179. Eilís Ní Chaoimh, PhD Researcher University of Galway
180. Dr Stephanie Dropuljic, Lecturer in Law, School of Law, University of Exeter
181. Dr Zaina Mahmoud, Lecturer, School of Law & Social Justice, University of Liverpool
182. Professor Yvette Russell, Professor of Law and Feminist Theory, University of Bristol
183. Professor Kimberley Brayson, Professor of Critical Jurisprudence, Leicester Law School, University of Leicester
184. Tamara Hervey, Jean Monnet Professor of EU Law, The City Law School, University of London
185. Dr David Lawrence, Durham Law School
186. James Milton, PhD Candidate at UCL Faculty of Laws
187. Isaac Abraham, Solicitor
188. Matteo Bassetti, PhD Candidate, Essex Law School
189. Cris van Eijk, PhD Candidate, Newcastle Law School
190. Dr Clair Quentin, Loughborough Law, Loughborough University

191. Dr Laura Graham, School of Law, Northumbria University
192. Dr Francesca Farrington, Lecturer, University of Aberdeen
193. Dr Michiel Poesen (School of Law, University of Aberdeen)
194. Dr Nevena Jevremovic, Lecturer in Law, University of Aberdeen
195. Alice Bushell, Solicitor
196. Dr Eva Nanopoulos, Reader in Law, Queen Mary University of London
197. Dr Benedict Douglas, Durham Law School
198. Dr Mitchell Lennan, School of Law, University of Aberdeen
199. Professor Beverley Clough, Manchester Law School, MMU
200. Alasdair Murray, Solicitor
201. Amy Allard-Dunbar, Research Assistant, Policy Institute, Faculty Social Science and Public Policy, King's College London
202. Professor Nadine El-Enany, School of Law, University of Kent
203. Dr Tanzil Chowdhury, School of Law, Queen Mary University of London
204. Raich Frith, PhD Student, Queen Mary University of London
205. Dr Elizabeth O'Loughlin, Durham Law School, Durham University

Agenda Item 2.3

Email to Jenny Rathbone from Melanie Matthews- 12.05.25

Good afternoon, Jenny

I work in the Gender Equality team in the Welsh Government.

At our recent Gender Equality forum, Dr Sarah Wallace and Professor Emily Underwood-Lee from the VAWDASV Research Network Wales presented to the forum to explain about the network and the work they have been undertaking.

I was asked by the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt to share details of this network, below is a brief overview;

The [VAWDASV Research Network Wales](#) is a non-constituted membership organisation led by two Co-Chairs both based at the University of South Wales, who facilitate, co-ordinate, and support the Network through time given to the Co-Chairs to run the Network. Additional support is provided by the Public Health Wales Violence Prevention Unit (PHW VPU), who support with some of the administration of the Networks meetings and publicity. Anyone with an interest in VAWDASV research within or beyond Wales is welcome to join the Network, and there is no charge for membership.

The Network aims to be an inclusive research community for Wales that provides a safe, open forum to bring together those who are working towards an end to VAWDASV to set the future research agenda, foster collaboration and develop grant applications, undertake high quality research, and work towards the elimination of VAWDASV.

Our membership includes over 200 people representing over 90 organisations including specialist VAWDASV services, higher education (HE), police and criminal justice, health, local authorities, the third sector, national government, schools and colleges, and sport. Together with our website, we hold regular online meetings with members and publish quarterly bilingual newsletters.

Examples of collaborative projects include:

Active

- [‘Listening is a big step’: Co-developing a Multi-Agency Framework with Black and Minority Ethnic Women for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence](#)
- [Stalking and Young People in Wales: Exploring and increasing knowledge, awareness and understanding](#)
- Efficacy of perpetrator interventions

Completed

- [Addressing Police Perpetrated Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(VAWDASV\): A Process Evaluation: Final Report](#)
- [Spaces for Change: Relief from Refuge for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse - Institute of Welsh Affairs](#)
- [Bawso BME Oral Stories Project](#)

I hope you find this information useful.

Thanks
Mel

Mel Matthews

(Rhagenwau Personol: Hi / Iddi | Personal Pronouns: She / Her)

Uwch Reolwr Polisi Rhywedd/Senior Gender Policy Manager

Yr Is-adran Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol / Equality and Human Rights Division

Grŵp Addysg, Diwylliant a'r Gymraeg / Education, Culture & Welsh Language Group

Llywodraeth Cymru/Welsh Government

Agenda Item 2.4

Email to Jenny Rathbone from Romy Overton-Edwards -16.05.25

Good morning,

I wanted to flag a [press release](#) and [blog post](#) from the Office for National Statistics regarding recently implemented improvements to the way it collects data on victims of domestic abuse to capture a wider range of abuse types and behaviours.

We thought these items may be of interest to yourselves and the Committee. Please let us know if there are any questions about any of the above.

Kind regards,

Romy

Romy Overton-Edwards | Parliamentary Committee Specialist | she/her

UK Statistics Authority | Awdurdod Ystadegau'r Deyrnas Unedig

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

Agenda Item 2.5


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/JH/1157/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

20 May 2025

Dear Jenny,

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny

As we celebrate 10 years of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act"), I welcome your inquiry into post legislative scrutiny of the Act. I am aware that a need for post-legislative scrutiny of the Act has been acknowledged through reports and debates over recent years.

More recently, the Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales published their statutory reports required under the Act and as part of their recommendations are also seeking a post legislative review. In June, I will be laying the report of the Future Generations Commissioner in the Senedd and alongside this, I will lay a Written Statement providing the Welsh Government's substantive response to both reports.

As part of preparations for a future evaluation of the Act, an Economic and Social Research Council policy fellow joined the Sustainable Futures Division in Welsh Government to design an evaluation of the Act and deliver the first stage of what is likely to be a multi-year evaluation. I expect to consider a report of this work in the Autumn term.



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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

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

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
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.

**Equality and Social Justice
Committee**

Carolyn Thomas, MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN
SeneddCydraddoldeb@senedd.cymru
senedd.cymru/SeneddCydraddoldeb
0300 200 6565

Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN
SeneddEquality@senedd.wales
senedd.wales/SeneddEquality
0300 200 6565

13 May 2025

Dear Carolyn,

P-06-1491 We demand a fair deal for residents affected by the Arbed and CESP scheme

Many thanks for your letter dated 3 April 2025 relating to the above petition which we noted at our meeting on 28 April. The Equality and Social Justice Committee has held two inquiries on this subject namely an inquiry on Fuel Poverty and the Warm Homes Programme and a follow-up inquiry looking at Fuel Poverty in Wales.

The Committee laid its most recent report: 'Turning up the heat before 2160: time to pick up the pace on tackling fuel poverty' on Monday 7 April 2025. Welsh Government will be responding to this report very soon.

We did not receive any specific information during the course of either inquiry regarding the situation in Caerau. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that it would not have been possible or appropriate for us to look into individual cases.

We did receive evidence more generally which highlighted damage to property and poor quality installations that some householders received under the previous Arbed schemes. That is why we called for a much more robust and fit for purpose quality assurance regime and for post-installation checks to be undertaken by an independent third party in future. This recommendation was accepted by the Welsh Government and has been implemented in full for the Nest element of the new Warm Homes Programme. As a result, the risk of a repeat of the unacceptable experiences highlighted by the petitioner should be greatly reduced in future.

We were sorry to hear of the petitioners experiences, which are unacceptable. We very much hope and expect a positive outcome can be achieved as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

Agenda item 2.7


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

Ein cyf/Our ref MA/JH/0997/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality & Social Justice Committee

21 May 2025

Dear Jenny,

We have read with interest the Equality and Social Justice committee report "Turning up the heat before 2160: time to pick up the pace on tackling fuel poverty" following your inquiry into Fuel Poverty in Wales and the Warm Homes Programme. We were pleased to attend committee on 27 January to give oral evidence and fully support this inquiry.

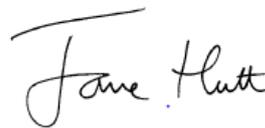
We would like to thank committee members for their consideration of the issues and their thoughtful recommendations.

Please find attached a written response to this report addressing each of the seven recommendations and with observations on the three conclusions.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth
Leol a Thai
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local
Government



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

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jayne.Bryant@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@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.



Welsh Government response to: Equality and Social Justice Committee

Turning up the heat before 2160: time to pick up the pace on tackling fuel poverty

May 2025

We would like to thank members of the Equality and Social Justice committee for their report on tackling fuel poverty, which has made several important recommendations. We have set out our response to the Report's individual recommendations below.

Contents

1. Recommendations	3
Recommendation 1.....	3
Recommendation 2.....	4
Recommendation 3.....	5
Recommendation 4.....	6
Recommendation 5.....	7
Recommendation 6.....	9
Recommendation 7.....	10
2. Conclusions	11
Conclusion 1.....	11
Conclusion 2.....	11
Conclusion 3.....	12

1. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government must ensure that its approach to tackling fuel poverty is up-to-date and fit for purpose. The Welsh Government should do this by:

- updating the data that informs estimates of fuel poverty and publishing up-to-date fuel poverty estimates by September 2025;
- setting interim fuel poverty targets at the earliest opportunity and no later than by September 2025; and
- publishing a revised Tackling Fuel Poverty Plan by the end of June 2025 which includes priority actions for the next two years.

Response: Accept

We are working to develop updated estimates of fuel poverty. We have commissioned the Building Research Establishment to carry out a fuel poverty assessment and they started this work in March.

The fuel poverty estimates will be determined using the three drivers of fuel poverty: energy efficiency of the home, the income of the household and the fuel costs of the household. The indicators will estimate the number of households in fuel poverty, those in severe fuel poverty and those at risk of fuel poverty. We will request the estimates at a local authority level where possible.

We anticipate updated fuel poverty estimates will be published in September.

These revised fuel poverty estimates will be used to develop meaningful interim targets based on EPC ratings. Officials will seek input from the Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel ahead of finalising the targets.

We are currently reviewing the actions in our Fuel Poverty Plan. Our review will report on progress against the ten short term actions in the Plan and will introduce new actions to ensure continued delivery and improvement. Our Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel have reviewed our proposed updates for the Fuel Poverty Plan and we will endeavour to publish by the end of June.

Financial Implications

The existing fuel poverty policy budget will cover the costs of updating the fuel poverty estimates.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Welsh Government gives further consideration to the benefits of FRESH and other mapping tools and how these can be deployed by partners in government to tackle fuel poverty. To achieve this, the Welsh Government should seek a meeting with Warm Wales (at officials level) to gain a better understanding of the FRESH mapping tool and subsequently provide resources for the deployment of FRESH or similar mapping tools for use by relevant bodies including all local authorities. We would welcome an update on progress no later than by the end of July 2025.

Response: Accept in principle

The primary cause of fuel poverty is low income. Our Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is a free resource, which can be used to identify areas most likely to include households in fuel poverty and eligible for our support. We can use our internal data and analytical services to map a range of data, such as fuel poverty estimates against the WIMD and against other issues such as housing conditions.

In addition, our Nest advice service includes community outreach. By getting out and engaging with local communities, they can identify and connect with households who need our help. We have also collaborated with local authorities on targeted leaflet drops, using WIMD data and confirming the target households through collaboration with local authority officers. The Energy Saving Trust (EST), which delivers our advice and referral service, uses a range of measures to target areas for support. Their outreach workers, through their work with grass roots organisations, also provide qualitative information to supplement quantitative data to facilitate effective targeting.

We know there are a range of organisations that work with local authorities to use vulnerability mapping already, these include the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Citizens Advice. There are also commercial organisations that offer similar tools. Some of the examples we have seen, however, produce much the same information as can be commissioned from our internal data and analytical services.

Welsh Government and local authorities are subject the Procurement Act 2023 and are required to have due regard to that legislation when procuring goods and services. The principles of fairness, openness and transparency apply to all procurement related activity. It is our understanding that the services offered by FRESH are not unique, and there are other suppliers in the market offering comparable services. Therefore, it would be unfair to promote a single supplier over others in this instance and would need to consider all vulnerability mapping tools. In order to do this, we would need to consider carefully what kind of tools are available already and what they offer, over and above anything we could commission internally, and the value for money of doing so.

Officials met with Warm Wales on 28 April to discuss the FRESH tool and its use as part of the organisation's wider activities associated with alleviating fuel poverty. We have gained

a better understanding of the tool and the underlying data, which is derived from publicly available data sets.

We understand most local authorities can already identify their vulnerable and fuel poor households and we have not been approached by them seeking funding to access additional tools for this purpose. Our approach is to allow local authorities to determine what works best for their local circumstances, rather than imposing a top-down approach, although a consistent understanding of fuel poverty at a local level is, of course, valuable. Local authorities are adept at knowing how to target support at their disadvantaged households. We would consider that it is for them to decide what works best in their own area, although they can, and do share experiences and learn from each other.

We support local authorities to establish ECO4 LA Flex schemes across Wales; now the schemes are established, the challenge is to engage local residents and maximise impact. Officials are undertaking an exercise with local authorities in the summer to refine the use of this funding. We will discuss the use of vulnerability tools during this process and, if it is something local authorities require, we will ensure their funding can be used for this purpose.

Financial Implications

The funding of local authorities to support their ECO Flex activities is accounted for in existing budgets.

Recommendation 3

The Welsh Government should increase the scale of the Nest programme so that as many homes as possible are supported. It should do this by:

- continuing to work with constructors and installers to increase capacity and skills in the sector; and
- commit to ensuring that any additional funding including any underspends, or Barnett consequential arising from increases in funding for tackling fuel poverty in England, is invested in the Warm Homes Programme.

This recommendation relates to funding in the 2025-26 financial year initially and future financial years.

Response: Accept in principle

The Nest scheme has created jobs in the retrofit supply chain, employing local trades and boosting the demand for these skills in communities across Wales. British Gas continue to work closely with contractors to ensure they upskill their workforce. Contractors provide training and support to everyone working on the scheme to ensure they are competent in

delivering work to PAS 2035 standards. The PAS 2035 Standard is the official framework for whole-house retrofit in the UK, establishing the processes and best practices for the industry. As volumes increase, British Gas continue to work with additional contractors to meet the level of demand.

Installer and supply chain issues are widespread in the retrofit industry across the UK. We are working with partners to take action on the imbalance of supply and demand which is impacting our ability to deliver quality installations at pace in Wales.

Existing and prospective installers have access to personal learning accounts, which opens up free access to training opportunities. We are working with the further and higher education sector in Wales to ensure the provision of courses meets the need.

Demand pressures on the whole supply chain of products and services in energy efficiency and low carbon heating will increase in the medium term. We continue to assess provision over time and plan training provision accordingly. As part of the development of the supply chain, we have developed the Wales Built Environment Dashboard to assist the supply chain in promoting itself and to access business support, including training.

On funding, we will continue to ensure any available underspends are used to deliver on our priorities. Within the housing portfolio, we must balance the need for more homes with the improvement of existing properties and reduction in fuel costs for those in poverty.

We recognise that the Nest scheme also sits alongside other initiatives such as ECO4, which do not rely on government funding. Consequently, we have supported local authorities to upscale ECO4 activity through establishing ECO4 LA Flex schemes, thereby increasing access to energy company obligations funding.

Changes to funding in England on programmes which are devolved in Wales result in changes to our block grant via the Barnett formula. However, those changes do not determine what the block grant should be spent on. It is for Welsh Ministers, with the Senedd's approval, to decide how to allocate the Welsh Government's budget which includes funding from the block grant, devolved taxes, and capital borrowing. Where there is a case for using the consequential funding for similar purposes, Welsh Ministers will deploy in line with its priorities as part of the appropriate budget process.

Financial Implications

The costs of ensuring contractors are skilled and qualified to deliver the requirements of the contract are met by the programme budget.

Recommendation 4

The Welsh Government should ensure that the current review of Nest includes an evaluation of:

-
- the process by which assessors deem air source heat pumps appropriate for an individual's needs as well as being appropriate for the property; and
 - how the scheme can improve awareness raising and training of householders to understand newer technologies, including air source heat pumps.

This should be completed by the end of June 2025.

Response: Accept

The current process includes a retrofit assessor visiting each property to advise on suitable measures using a whole house approach. This whole house assessment is then reviewed by an independent team of energy, finance, and retrofit experts, who determine whether the measures identified are the most appropriate for each property in order to meet the required targets for bill savings, carbon reduction and energy performance.

As part of the current review, and in light of recent changes to PAS rules, since 1 April we have included gas boilers as a possible measure for properties where air source heat pumps (ASHP) are not suitable. We will continue to review the measures available through the programme and update when necessary.

Retrofit assessors currently provide advice and guidance to all customers on the measures being installed in their properties. However, as a result of the current review, British Gas are developing a Customer Information Pack which will provide detailed information and advice on the use of installed measures. This pack will be available to all customers from summer 2025.

In addition, our Nest advisors provide myth busting information regarding low carbon technology as part of their communications and marketing activity.

Financial Implications

These changes are being met within the programme budget.

Recommendation 5

The Welsh Government should ensure that the current review of Nest includes an assessment of:

- the number of referrals that are declined and how these rates compare with previous iterations of the scheme; and

- the training and development provided to Nest caseworkers with a view to ensuring they have a full knowledge of the scheme.

The outcome of the review should be shared with the Committee and be completed no later than July 2025.

Response: Accept

Since the implementation of the new iteration of Nest, there has been a significant increase in referrals being declined. As part of the ongoing review, officials have been working to understand the reason for this increase and to explore solutions to reduce this rate. Since November, several mitigations have been introduced, including:

- Widening the crisis route to include all Nest eligible applicants.
- Widening the criteria to include those in EPC D rated properties, who would previously have been included on a waiting list.
- Enabling customers to provide required documentation during home visits, rather than uploading online.
- Including gas boilers as a possible measure, where ASHPs are not suitable.

As a result of these changes, there has been a significant increase in referrals to the programme – from 106 in December to 266 and 279 in February and March respectively. Between April and June, we will be monitoring the impact of these changes on the number of referrals that are being declined after being passed to British Gas with the expectation we will see a significant reduction.

Whilst officials are aware of the evidence provided regarding the inconsistency of advice given by Nest advisers, it must be noted that throughout the contract year, the net promoters score for customer service as part of the end of call survey has remained at world class. In addition, the net promoter score for the postal/email survey improved from 'good' for the rest of the programme year to 'excellent' for the first time in March, showing that as the scheme is bedding in, with continuous improvement being prioritised.

However, with a programme this size, there will inevitably be some customers who are not entirely satisfied with the service they receive, particularly with a programme in its infancy. Since the committee's evidence session in December, officials and Energy Saving Trust have worked with Warm Wales and Care and Repair to identify examples where the advice provided has been inaccurate or below expectations. Care and Repair have been able to provide a very low number of examples where training needs have been identified, which have now been taken forward. Whilst no specific training examples have been received from Warm Wales, officials have agreed a line of communication in order to pick up any concerns they may have in the future.

As part of telephone advisor induction, all advisors have Nest programme specific training, covering the customer journey, eligibility, Nest processes and procedures, customer relationship management and compliance and data protection training.

In addition, all advisors are required to undertake the NEA City & Guilds Energy Awareness 6281-01 (Level 3) as standard. They will also go through a customer service induction. All advisors will undertake energy advice provision training centred on behavioural advice and potential savings that customers can achieve by making simple changes. They also undertake income assessment training and are tested quarterly. All advisors are also tested on Nest eligibility on a quarterly basis.

Energy Saving Trust has also recently developed an in-house energy advice course for the Nest team, comprising of the following modules, which will be rolled out from June.

Module 1: Introduction to retrofit and net zero

Module 2: Technologies - key operations explained and focus on the benefits to householders

Module 3: Identifying customer needs and matching solutions eg asking the right questions to understand customer needs

Module 4: Practical scenarios and roleplay

Our contractors are measured on the number of complaints received. Throughout the first year of the programme, this has remained below 1% of the numbers the scheme has supported, which is within our target of 3%.

Financial Implications

None. The developments and improvements detailed are being met within the programme budget.

Recommendation 6

The Welsh Government should ensure there is maximum transparency, with key performance monitoring data in relation to Nest published on at least an annual basis. This recommendation should be completed in line with the reporting cycles for the Nest annual reports.

Response: Accept

It is our intention that an annual report will be published in the Summer following each contract year.

Financial Implications

None.

Recommendation 7

The Welsh Government must speed up its development and establish a new area-based scheme as a matter of urgency. To ensure accountability the Welsh Government should sketch out a route map of timescales and milestones between now and the target date for going live (in the form of the first energy efficiency measures being physically installed in properties) by the end of June 2025. Given the considerable gap since the end of the last scheme we would expect this route map to be ambitious but deliverable.

Response: Accept in principle

Welsh Government officials are currently developing options for decarbonising within geographical areas, as a complementary approach to the demand-led Nest scheme. Considerations include the geographical spread of energy inefficient housing, potential technology solutions and impacts on economies of scale. They are also taking into consideration the large number of area-based schemes already completed through Arbed, which benefitted from EU funding no longer available to us.

In the meantime, we are already supporting some schemes with specific technical needs. For example, we are funding work at two British Iron and Steel Federation estates in Cardiff. The homes are technically challenging, generally cold and difficult to heat, with some owned by the local authority and others privately owned. We have agreed to fund the retrofitting of all homes, irrespective of tenure, as one project.

Our Optimised Retrofit Programme has funded social landlords to offer retrofit on an area basis where there are significant numbers of social homes alongside houses of other tenures. This option is available to any social landlord when they are assessing potential schemes.

Should there be a robust case for a new area-based scheme, it would need to be included in a future Spending Round bid and considered for funding alongside other priorities. The alternative is to transfer funds from the Nest scheme, which is counterproductive. Consequently, we will not be in a position to set out a meaningful routemap by the end of June, as recommended by the Committee.

Financial Implications

The establishment of any new scheme would require additional resources, the amount being dependent on the scale of any scheme.

2. Conclusions

Conclusion 1

We note that direct investment in the Warm Homes Programme has not substantially increased since 2021-22 when accounting for inflation and that this, along with higher costs associated with newer technologies will have eroded the purchasing power of this funding over time.

Response:

We recognise construction inflation, and the higher costs of new technologies and complex retrofit packages, has had an impact on the number of homes we can support within a broadly flat budget envelope. However, the budget reflects the considerable constraints placed on us by the funding we received from the previous UK Government over many years. Increased funding for 2025-26 is welcome, and I am pleased that, in the context of significant calls on funding across a range of public services, I have been able to secure modest increases to the Nest budget.

It is important that the budget reflects what we can deliver, and that is partly dependent on contractor capacity in Wales to deliver the programme to the PAS2035 industry standard. This standard ensures we are not facing the same issues of poor workmanship that the UK Government is encountering in their ECO and GBIS schemes.

If we find we can exceed projected delivery in any year, we have the ability to consider in-year funding allocations in the usual manner.

Conclusion 2

It is disappointing that TrustMark has been unwilling or unable to provide disaggregated data as requested by the Welsh Government. To ensure accountability, we support the Welsh Government's efforts to press this issue and that of quality control with them and with counterparts in the UK Government.

Response:

Officials will continue to speak to Ofgem and Trustmark on this issue. In the meantime, the publicly available statistics on household energy efficiency includes helpful data and charts to track progress, including differences at a local authority level: [Household Energy Efficiency Statistics, detailed report 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

Conclusion 3

We reiterate our previous calls (made most recently in our Draft Budget 2025-26 report) for the Welsh Government to redouble its efforts to ensure that all local authorities apply the Policy in Practice methodology across the board.

Response:

Linked to the work to streamline Welsh Benefits with the aim of exploring the complexities around data sharing, Welsh Government are undertaking a 12-month benefit take up pilot working with Policy in Practice's Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT).

The voluntary pilot commenced in January 2025 with 12 local authorities across Wales taking part. Using the LIFT tracker these authorities will be able to identify and directly target residents who are missing out on their financial entitlements.

In addition to the 12 local authorities on the pilot there are 2 additional authorities who are using the LIFT tracker, meaning a total of 14 authorities across Wales.

As part of the pilot, a robust evaluation will be undertaken, which will inform any future decisions on whether using a data analytical tool such as LIFT is the best way of maximising household incomes.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

22 May 2025

Dear Jenny

Scrutiny sessions on prisons and criminal justice

Thank you for your letter of 13 May 2025 regarding the cancellation of the scrutiny sessions on prisons and criminal justice.

Given the Committee's interest in the provision of health and social care services in Welsh prisons, we look forward to receiving details of the rearranged sessions in due course.

Yours sincerely



Peter Fox MS

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

—
**Public Accounts and Public
Administration Committee**

Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

SeneddCCGG@senedd.cymru

senedd.cymru/SeneddCCGG

0300 200 6565

—
Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales

senedd.wales/SeneddPAPA

0300 200 6565

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

28 May 2025

Dear Jenny,

Implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

During our meeting on Wednesday 14 May, the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee considered the [Future Generations Commissioner's Report 2025](#) and the Auditor General for Wales' report, [No time to lose: Lessons from our work under the Well-being of Future Generations Act](#), and agreed that the contents falls within your Committee's remit.

We welcome the intention of the Equality and Social Justice Committee to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and wish to pass on our reflections from these reports, which may be relevant to you inquiry.

We are pleased to note the Auditor General for Wales' conclusion that the Act, over time, has increased in prominence and that there is demonstrable evidence of it influencing longer-term planning, decision-making and working practices. However, there are significant concerns about how the Act has been implemented on a practical level and is not delivering the intended "system-wide change that was intended".

During our discussions, we identified the following points as areas of specific concern:

- Are the deficiencies outlined in the Auditor General for Wales' report inherent in the legislation itself, whether there's an issue of implementation not caused by the legislation or a combination of the two?



- We note that issues can also be caused by the clarity and certainty of funding available for public bodies and the accountability frameworks that are in place.
- This uncertainty is compounded by a failure to gather better data on the impact of decisions, as well as on the impact of them.
- We are concerned about the lack of legal consequences arising from failures to implement the legislation, with questions about what the practical consequences really are of decisions not being made in line with the Act.
- We also note that subsequent legislation has sought to embed the principles of the Act, but has this led to some duplication and additional complication for public bodies when it comes to implementation?
- Finally, the Committee concurred with the Auditor General for Wales that there had been an insufficient focus by the Welsh Government on prevention measures. We endorse Recommendation 3 of the report and would be interested to hear more about the Committee's findings in this area.

We look forward to hearing the conclusions from your work in this area. The Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee is open to future joint work in this area should you consider it to be beneficial.

Regards,



Mark Isherwood MS

Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 2.10



Department
for Work &
Pensions

THE RT HON. SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London, SW1H 9NA

ministers@dwp.gov.uk

Your ref/ Eich cyf: JH/PO/202/25

22 May 2025

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

By email/Drwy e-bost: PSCSSJTCW@gov.wales

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 28 April 2025 about the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee report, '**Anything's Achievable with the Rights Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap**'. The UK Government has ambitious plans around employment, including disability employment, set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper, published on 26 November. A fully inclusive labour market that enables disabled people and people with health conditions to have access to the same opportunities as everyone else to the benefits of work is crucial to meeting our ambition for an 80% employment rate. As part of the Get Britain Working Plan, more disabled people and those with health conditions will be supported to enter and stay in work.

Disability Confident

I was interested in the report's recommendations about strengthening the Disability Confident scheme. In my letter dated 4 December 2024 to the Chair of the Committee, I highlighted the scheme's importance in promoting disability-inclusive workplaces and enabling more disabled people to access work-related opportunities. I also recognised there are opportunities to strengthen the scheme and have been discussing these ideas with stakeholders.

We are working on making the Disability Confident Scheme more robust and will be engaging stakeholders to understand the most effective way to progress this really important priority. As noted in your correspondence, my officials have already contacted Welsh Government colleagues to include them in this work. We appreciate the efforts of Welsh Government officials and the Disabled People's Employment Champions in increasing the number of Disability Confident Leaders and promoting the scheme.

Access to Work

As you know, the UK Government recently launched a public consultation through the *Pathways to Work* Green Paper which sets out our ambition to improve employment

support for disabled people and those with health conditions. I would welcome the Welsh Government's views as part of this consultation process.

We are committed to reforming the Access to Work scheme, putting the views and voices of disabled people at the heart of all that we do, so we will consult on these proposals with disabled people and representative organisations.

Collaboration with the Welsh Government

I welcome the Welsh Government's commitment to identifying and removing barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in the workforce, remaining in work, and progressing their careers, which the UK Government shares. I look forward to continuing to work closely with you on this important agenda.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Timms'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability

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

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/202/25

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability

Minister.SSD@dwp.gov.uk

28 April 2025

Dear Stephen,

I am writing to bring to your attention the recently published report by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee titled '[Anything's Achievable with the Rights Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap](#)'. The report draws upon evidence provided to the Committee by a wide range of stakeholders, including trade unions, employer associations, careers advisors and representatives from the disability rights sector. The Welsh Government will be responding to report's recommendations in due course.

Some elements of the report relate to reserved matters, specifically, recommendation 4 on the Disability Confident Scheme and conclusion 5 on Access to Work.

Regarding the recommendation on the Disability Confident Scheme, the report calls for changes to strengthen the scheme, encouraging more employers to participate and ensuring it effectively supports disabled people. We broadly agree with this recommendation. I understand that our respective officials have discussed the scheme and that the UK Government is interested in exploring ways to make the scheme more robust in due course. We would welcome continued engagement on this matter.

In the meantime, my officials, including our team of Disabled People's Employment Champions are continuing to raise awareness of Disability Confident. Our objective is to increase the number of Disability Confident Leaders (Level 3) in Wales, particularly in the devolved public sector.

Regarding Access to Work, the report calls for a review of the scheme to ensure it is more accessible and effective for disabled people. This includes addressing the operational challenges and ensuring timely support for those who need it. I understand that a review of Access to Work is subject to the consultation on the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper. We will reference Access to Work in the Welsh Government's wider response to the Pathways to Work green paper.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
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.

The Welsh Government is committed to identifying and removing barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in the workforce, remaining in work, and progressing their careers. The Disability Confident Scheme and Access to Work has an important role and we believe collaboration with the UK Government is essential to achieve meaningful progress.

Yours sincerely

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JACK SARGEANT". The signature is written in a bold, cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the entire name.

Jack Sargeant AS/MS

Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of Equality and Social Justice
Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

1 Cwr y Ddinas / 1 Capital Quarter
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF10 4BZ
Tel / Ffôn: 029 2032 0500
Fax / Ffacs: 029 2032 0600
Textphone / Ffôn testun: 029 2032 0660
info@audit.wales / post@archwilio.cymru
www.audit.wales / www.archwilio.cymru

Reference: AC498/caf
Date issued: 28 May 2025

Dear Jenny

Post-legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Thank you for your letter of 19 May. I welcome the Committee's inquiry and would be pleased to attend on 30 June as invited. We will liaise with the clerking team as you suggest.

Much of what we have to say will build on our recent report. However, I am mindful that we will want to expand on issues the report touches on that are relevant to the Committee's terms of reference; for example, our position around how my duties under the legislation are framed against the backdrop of the increasing number of bodies subject to the duty and impacts from Senedd reform.

Other pressures have limited our capacity to respond during the Committee's initial consultation window. I understand that Audit Wales colleagues have already discussed with the clerking team that there would be the opportunity to follow up after the evidence session in writing and ahead of the rest of the Committee's inquiry. I hope that will be acceptable to you and the Committee but do, please, let me know if not.

Yours sincerely



ADRIAN CROMPTON
Auditor General for Wales



30 May 2025

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Dear Jenny

British Sign Language (BSL) (Wales) Bill

As you will be aware, on 19 June 2024, I secured the Senedd's agreement to introduce the BSL (Wales) Bill following my success in the Member Bill ballot held in April 2024.

The Bill is scheduled for formal introduction to the Senedd on Monday 14 July 2025. Prior to this, the pre-introduction period will commence on Monday 16 June, during which the Bill will be sent to the Llywydd for her consideration of the Bill under section 110(3) of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

In advance of the pre-introduction period, I have today published the [draft Bill](#) and accompanying [Explanatory Notes](#). My aim in publishing the Bill now is to provide as much time as possible for those affected by the Bill to be able to consider the detail it contains.

MARK ISHERWOOD MS|AS

Member of the Welsh Parliament for **North Wales**
Aelod Senedd Cymru dros **Ogledd Cymru**



Welsh
Conservatives

Ceidwadwyr
Cymreig

Given the remit of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, I am writing to you as Chair with the assumption that the Bill will be referred to your committee for scrutiny once it has been formally introduced. I hope that early publication of the Bill will help you begins any preparatory work in advance of that formal scrutiny. Whilst it is still currently in development, I hope to also be able to share with the committee a copy of the full Explanatory Memorandum that will accompany the Bill. I aim to do that when it is sent to the Llywydd for pre-introduction.

The timetable for the Bill's progression is yet to be confirmed by the Business Committee. However, given the Standing Order deadlines I have to work to, and that the Senedd's Dissolution period will begin on 8 April 2026, I anticipate that the timetable will be fairly tight. I would be very happy to assist the committee in any way possible that would support that scrutiny process.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Isherwood". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mark Isherwood MS
Member of the Welsh Parliament for North Wales

Revised timetable for consideration: Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Employment Rights Bill

May 2025

On 10 December 2024, the Business Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 29.4(i), to invite the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, the Equality and Social Justice Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to consider and report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Employment Rights Bill.

In accordance with Standing Order 29.4(ii), the Business Committee agreed that the committees should report to the Senedd by 7 March 2025.

On 18 February 2025, the Business Committee agreed a new reporting deadline for the committees to report on the memoranda relating to the Bill, of 28 March 2025.



On 13 May 2025, the Business Committee agreed to invite the Health and Social Care Committee to consider and report on the Legislative Consent Memoranda on the Employment Rights Bill.

The Committee also agreed to extend the reporting deadline for all committees to report on the Memoranda relating to the bill, by 20 June 2020.



By email

Angharad Roche Deputy Clerk to Committee
Equalities and Social Justice Committee, Senedd Cymru

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

cymwysterau.cymru

qualifications.wales

02 June 2025

Inquiry into Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Dear Angharad

Thank you for inviting Qualifications Wales to participate in an oral evidence session on 7 July 2025 to contribute to this inquiry.

We understand that the inquiry is interested in:

- how far the intended objective of the Act is being achieved
- any action which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation, including any specific drafting issues
- whether the review and reporting requirements under the Act are being met
- the effectiveness of guidance made under the Act
- how far the Act has been legally binding and enforceable
- how far the Act has represented, and will continue to represent, value for money.

You will be aware that Qualifications Wales was just listed under this Act on 1 July 2024. We have published our [Corporate Plan](#) containing our [Well-being Statement and well-being objectives](#) and will be making our first report of progress against these in 2025.

If our experiences as a newly listed organisation would be useful to you then we are happy to participate.

[Redacted signature area]

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Blaker'.

Philip Blaker

Chief Executive, Qualifications Wales

Qualifications Wales

Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park
Newport
NP10 8AR



Pack Page 43

Cymwysterau Cymru

Adeilad Q2, Lôn Pencarn
Parc Imperial
Casnewydd
NP10 8AR

Agenda Item 2.15



Briefing: a strategic approach to rebuilding the immigration legal sector

Despite efforts by Welsh Government to strengthen the immigration advice and legal sector, Wales lacks a comprehensive strategy for the sector's regeneration and growth. The scarcity of immigration legal services in Wales, against a backdrop of general decline in legal provision, demands a strategic approach that builds broad collaboration. Development is more than a matter of funding; the current lack of expertise and poor infrastructure require a long-term strategy.

Decision-makers and stakeholders could seize this opportunity to almost completely reimagine the sector. Due to its geographic and population size, innovative and integrated services could be modelled in Wales on a relatively small scale, while at the same time connecting and engaging nationally.

What will we gain from developing a strategy for the immigration advice and legal sector?

Developing a co-produced strategy has many benefits. Engaging with a broad range of stakeholders and people with lived experience of migration will bring new insights and a deeper understanding of challenges facing people who need access to advice and justice. Competing interests can be better balanced and potential impacts of changes better highlighted. Strategic sector development will lead to a more sustainable, longer-term vision that builds on current strengths and addresses hidden challenges. Some of the benefits are set out below.

An integrated sector

A strategy for development can target resources to support existing relationships and partnerships and identify where there is potential to develop new collaborations and where they are needed.

Community focus

A strategy that is co-produced with people with lived experience and which aims to strengthen and develop community-based approaches would result in services that are more accessible, more resilient, and more responsive to need. A piecemeal approach to funding and development risks duplication or waste of resources by implementing services that are not targeted where there is most need.

Best practice built on existing resources

Involving a wide range of potential partners brings benefits from the greatest expertise. Identifying what currently works and why will help to develop improved infrastructure for skills exchange, training, and development schemes.

Strong links with frontline and community services

Community organisations, frontline support services, and informal networks can offer insight into need and ease access to regulated immigration advice.

Engaging funders and resource-providers

Strategic involvement of funders results in better targeting of grants and subsidies. A strategy will also benefit from an understanding of what has worked in the past and will be improved by engaging funders' expertise in sector-building, funder partner networks, and identifying under-funded communities or areas of work.

Influencing policy

A well-developed strategy can give a clear picture to decision-makers and funders and demonstrate where policy changes can be effective in addressing priority needs. Engaging influencers, researchers, and policy experts in developing a strategy will strengthen its evidence base.

Evaluation, monitoring, and evidencing need

Developing a strategy for the immigration advice sector in Wales could present an opportunity to develop and implement a workable, common approach to reporting and data collection, focusing on a few vital key indicators. This could provide valuable Welsh-specific data about migration, needs, and services that could be used to attract future funding and inform the further development of services.

In short, developing a comprehensive, co-produced strategy would make for a more effective and more sustainable immigration advice and legal sector.

What is an effective and sustainable sector?

An effective and sustainable immigration advice and legal sector is one that...

...is financially sustainable

Legal aid is the biggest single funding source enabling access to justice in the UK. The loss of legal aid for many types of immigration case since 2012, the extreme inadequacy of Emergency Case Funding as a safety net, and the crumbling network of immigration legal aid solicitors, all continue to have a devastating effect on access to justice in Wales. But it is not the only source. Welsh Government funding is essential to meet duties in relation to human, economic and social rights, and to address social injustice. Other potential sources of funding include local authority funding or commissioning, trust and foundations, private sources, and other forms of statutory funding, including funds from public health and police commissioners. A strategic approach to harnessing and integrating funding is essential to the long-term health of the sector.

...meets need

The sector must meet the needs of all migrants who need immigration legal advice and help, and free or low-cost advice and representation must be available to all who cannot afford it. Good geographical coverage is vital to reach migrant communities in North and West Wales, in rural areas, and without good transport links. Provision must be adaptable to changing need and fluctuating populations. It must sustain people throughout the legal process, whether they need one-off advice, casework, or representation at tribunal or in the courts.

...engages and is led by lived experience

An effective strategy should design a sector that is staffed by people with lived experience of the immigration system, and fairly includes them as trustees, managers, policy makers and decision-makers. This means designing structures, training, and regulatory systems that are accessible and supportive for migrants. Service users need to be empowered and able to exercise their rights.

...is resilient and responsive to change

A resilient and responsive sector needs a mix of free, low-cost, and fee-charging provision that ensures that people can access justice when they need it, a strong and balanced mix of legal aid and IAA provision, new legal services, legal and advice services embedded in community organisations and frontline support, and a strong and healthy third sector in which to thrive.

...develops and draws from a sustained pool of expertise

The problem of how enough specialist immigration advisors can be trained and developed requires careful planning. This requires creativity and a mixture of immediate and longer-term measures. Staff need strong career pathways within the sector but also across sectors, so that varied expertise can be drawn on and can nourish related sectors. Good capacity and a healthily-sized sector are key.

...is integrated with a wider network of provision and support

Collaboration between specialist legal advisors and frontline agencies can result in better referral networks and more seamless support. People's immigration needs do not exist in isolation from their social and welfare needs. It is important that legal services are not segregated from other migrant support services, but that they link into each other and work mutually in the interests of the people who use them.

How could such a strategy be developed?

A strategy for rebuilding the immigration advice and legal sector needs to involve all relevant partners, including people who use immigration legal services. Developing and implementing a strategy involves open and ongoing conversations with stakeholders, comprehensive mapping of existing and potential services, imaginative thinking, and political will.

Over the next year, the Bevan Foundation will deliver a project which aims to create an outline strategy for developing the free-at-source immigration legal sector in Wales. To do this, we will map need and provision across Wales, look at where and how new and complementary services might be developed, and consider how different stakeholders and partners could work together to improve sustainability and development.

More information about this project can be found [on our website](#).

Read the full report

Our report Desert to Oasis, the case for a strategic approach to building a strong immigration legal sector in Wales, is available at <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/resources/strategic-approach-immigration-legal-sector/>

For further information, please contact:

Isata Kanneh
Project Lead, Access to Justice
Bevan Foundation
isata.kanneh@bevanfoundation.org

Citation

If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is:

Kanneh, I. (June 2025) *Briefing: a strategic approach to rebuilding the immigration legal sector*, Bevan Foundation.

Permission to share

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



The license permits download, reuse, reprint, distribution or copying with attribution and without modification, for non-commercial use.

For commercial use, please contact: info@bevanfoundation.org

Agenda Item 4

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 6

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

Document is Restricted

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

Document is Restricted