

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 14 July 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

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2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill Formula in Wales – the funding system for primary care

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2.2 P-06-1506 We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales

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2.3 P-06-1513 Appeal: Wales Autism Bill 2019 (For the Few, Not the Many)

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2.4 P-06-1529 Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030

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3.1 P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales

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- 3.2 P-06-1288 Deliver Magor and Undy Walkway Station, part of the Burns Delivery Programme, as a quick win
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- 3.3 P-06-1365 Re-open railway lines to connect the north and south of Wales
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- 3.4 P-06-1389 Introduce a 30mph limit on the trunk road through the villages of Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais
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- 3.6 P-06-1476 1000 meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries
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- 3.7 P-06-1482 Ban smartphones in all schools in Wales (with exemptions for exceptional circumstances)
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- 4.1 P-06-1488 Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long COVID Crisis in Wales
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- 5.1 Review of Standing Order 23 and Petitions Process
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P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill formula in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: RS25/11625

Introduction

Petition Number: [P-06-1505](#)

Petition title: Review the Carr Hill formula in Wales

Text of petition:

The Carr Hill Formula was introduced with the new GMS contract in 2004.

It has created enormous, unjustifiable and unsafe funding differences between practices and has never once been reviewed in Wales.

The General Practice Council of England are suggesting a new funding formula is their number 1 priority. However, this is not the case in Wales.

GP Practices get the bulk of their income from the number of patients they have registered with them.

The Carr Hill Formula - which relies on historic data - assigns a number between 0.6 and 1.32 for every GP Practice in Wales.

An average GP practice has around 10,000 patients. If the GP Practice has a 0.6 rating - then they will only get paid for 6000 patients. Whereas, if they have a 1.32 rating - they will get paid for 13,200.



The funding differences between some GP Practices looking after the same number of patients is now very close to £1,000,000. This is absurd and totally unacceptable.

It is time the Welsh Government started looking at the data, reviewing the evidence and allocating resources appropriately.

It is a nonsense to continue to keep pouring money into a system where there is no scrutiny about how it is distributed.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

Background

The majority of GP practices in Wales are run by independent partnerships of GPs who are contracted by local health boards to provide medical services according to the [General Medical Services \(GMS\) contract](#). As described by the [British Medical Association \(BMA\)](#), the GMS contract payment mechanism is complex, but fundamentally based upon the number of patients registered at a surgery.

Most of a practice's income comes from the Global Sum payment, which is based on a weighted sum for every patient on the practice list. The Global Sum allocation formula (the Carr-Hill formula) is a complex formula used to apply these weightings, and accounts for factors like age, rurality and gender. Additional funding is then provided towards the costs of things like GP premises, IT systems, and providing certain supplementary services.

Each year, contract negotiations between the Welsh Government, General Practitioners Council (GPC) and NHS Wales take place, which includes agreement on funding.

[Stakeholders](#) have expressed significant concerns about the Carr-Hill formula, stating that it is outdated and doesn't reflect population healthcare needs. A [2024 study by Cardiff University](#) found that GP practices in more deprived areas in Wales receive discernibly less funding per patient than those in less deprived areas.

Welsh Parliament action

The Health and Social Care Committee is currently carrying out an [inquiry on the future of general practice](#). The terms of reference include consideration of the funding model for general practice. Oral evidence gathering will take place in the autumn term.

Welsh Government response

In his response to the Petitions Committee (23 June 2023), the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care said that he was aware of concerns raised by some practices that the Carr-Hill funding allocation does not fully address the demands of their local circumstances.

He highlighted that the funding allocation for general practice is subject to contract negotiations, and said that he was unable to comment further on this petition until the negotiations for the 2025-26 contract, scheduled to commence before the summer recess, have taken place.

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.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1505
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/01232/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions committee

23 June 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill Formula in Wales - the funding system for primary care.

Since 2004, the majority of general practice funding has been derived from the global sum payment. This is based on the number of patients registered and weighted using the Carr-Hill formula to take account of proxy measures for workload. The weighting factors include age and sex, mortality and morbidity, as well as rurality.

I am aware of concerns raised by some practices that the Carr-Hill funding allocation does not fully address the demands of their local circumstances, and I recently visited a practice in Cardiff to learn more about these.

BMA Wales is the recognised representative body for doctors in Wales. The Welsh Government is committed to a social partnership approach for contractual matters and we engage with NHS Wales and GPC Wales in annual tripartite negotiations. The funding allocation for general practice is subject to contract negotiations.

Negotiations for the 2025-26 contract are scheduled to commence ahead of the summer recess. I cannot comment further on this petition until those discussions have taken place.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

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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.

**P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill Formula in Wales - the funding system for primary care
– Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 30 June 2025**

Good morning,

Thanks for this. I knew that contract negotiations for primary care are between the Welsh Government and the GPC Wales – with some passive involvement from NHS figures representing the 7 different Health Boards. I know that individual GP contractors are shut out of this process.

A recent piece of work by the Health and Social Care Committee looked into Future of General Practice – *could you let me know what they are planning to do with the information they have collected?*

[Inquiry into the future of general practice in Wales](#)

I contributed to this GP – 18 Dr. Matthew Jones.

The petition was initially started to request that the funding formula is reviewed. I have no idea whether this is going to be the case.

Is the Welsh Government going to review the GP funding (Carr Hill) formula?

Thanks,

Dr. Matthew Jones

GP

P-06-1506 We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: SR25/11625-2

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1506

Petition title: We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales.

Text of petition: Substantial sums have already been directed towards cycling projects, managed by organisations like Sustrans, courtesy of the Welsh Labour Party. While cycling paths provide benefits to a small segment of the population, the allocation of these funds comes at the expense of far more critical areas like healthcare and education that serves the broader population. We believe that taxpayer money should be redirected to support these essential services that benefit everyone, not niche projects.

Between April 2021 and March 2024, Sustrans (A charity) received £3,879,376.26 from the Welsh Government. Reference: GOV.Wales



In 2020, the Welsh Government announced a £38 million investment in active travel across Wales, marking the largest ever investment in local active travel improvements in the country. Reference: Sustrans

Additionally, in November 2024, Sustrans Cymru was awarded a new contract to deliver the Welsh Government's Active Journeys programme, continuing its work to support children and young people across Wales in traveling sustainably and actively. Reference: Sustrans

These substantial investments highlight the significant funding already allocated to cycling infrastructure and related programmes in Wales.

Investing in critical areas that serves the broader population is essential for the well-being of Wales. Let's prioritise what truly matters and ensure that public money is used where it can make the greatest difference for the many, not the few.

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1. Background

The [Wales Transport Strategy](#) puts walking and cycling at the top of the sustainable transport hierarchy. It also sets a target for 45% of journeys to be made by public transport, walking and cycling by 2040 up from the 32% estimated in 2020. [Net Zero Wales](#) also sets a target to increase trip mode share of active travel to 33% by 2030 and at least 35% by 2040.

The [Active Travel Wales Act 2013](#) places a duty on the Welsh Government and local authorities to continuously improve active travel provision (which includes provision for walking, cycling and [wheeling](#)) through securing new and improved active travel routes and related facilities. It also requires local authorities to prepare [Active Travel Network Maps \(ATNMs\)](#) every three years showing existing active travel routes, alongside new proposed routes.

The Welsh Government supports local authorities with annual funding to deliver active travel schemes - the majority of which is distributed through the [Active Travel Fund](#). This includes a core allocation for local authorities to make small scale continuous improvements. The remainder is competitive funding for larger, developed schemes. [Transport for Wales \(TfW\)](#) administers the fund.

Funding has [increased significantly in recent years](#), although this has [not necessarily translated into increased rates of active travel](#).

1.1. There has been a shift in priorities from cycling to walking

In June 2024 [the Welsh Government told the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee \(CCEI\)](#) there's "a new emphasis...that active travel funding can be used for pedestrian movements, walking, to support high-quality pavements".

In a November 2024 [paper provided to the CCEI Committee](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS (the Cabinet Secretary) outlined "new priorities for walking, wheeling and cycling". The paper stated **[emphasis added]**:

*Underpinning these priorities will be a hierarchy of users founded on social justice and inclusion, with the most vulnerable walkers and wheelers at the top. Investment decisions will be based on this hierarchy. **In practice this will mean that infrastructure for walking and wheeling will take priority.***

Further details were explored during the CCEI Committee's scrutiny of the 2025-26 draft transport budget where the Cabinet Secretary stated:

...the active travel funding for 2025-26 has been maintained...But we are placing an emphasis in 2025-26 on fixing streets, improving pavements, a focus on walking to and from school, making sure that streets are safe for all...So, there is a much stronger focus moving forward on walking and wheeling—and by 'wheeling' I mean pushing a pram; I mean being in a wheelchair—because this is about inclusive movement, it's about inclusive travel, and that's what we're going to be focusing on.

In 2024 the Cabinet Secretary also set out his intention to devolve “responsibility, decision making and the funding to the regions”. From 2026-27 a number of transport related grants, including the Active Travel Fund would be merged and allocated on a regional basis to support the delivery of Regional Transport Plans. Cycling.UK has voiced concern that investment in cycling infrastructure could be lost if the funding for active travel is not ring-fenced.

On 1 July the Welsh Government set out its 2026-27 budget approach. It is not clear at this stage whether plans to move to regional based funding will still go ahead.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 12 June 2025, the Cabinet Secretary reiterates his focus on walking and wheeling and states that:

Most schemes that have been funded [by the Active Travel Fund to date] benefit walking and wheeling as well as cycling; in fact, there were more schemes focussed solely on walking and wheeling than schemes that were focused solely on cycling.

The letter also provides details on funding to Sustrans as raised by the petitioner.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In addition to the approach to active travel being raised several times in the Senedd as highlighted earlier in this brief, the Public Accounts and Public

Administration Committee (PAPAC) has recently undertaken an inquiry on active travel more generally.

The Committee undertook its inquiry in response to a 2024 report on active travel from Audit Wales which found that:

Despite increased spending through its Active Travel Fund and a new delivery plan, the Welsh Government remains a long way from achieving the step change in active travel intended [through the Act and]...approaches to monitoring and evaluation do not currently go far enough to enable robust tracking of progress or an overall assessment of value for money.

The report made ten recommendations to the Welsh Government, all of which were accepted.

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Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1506
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/00732/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

12 June 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 02 May regarding Petition P-06-1506 We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales.

Our spending plans have been shaped to prioritise public services, ensuring they continue to deliver for the people of Wales with investment being targeted towards delivering on the Welsh Government's priorities. The Final Budget 2025-26 delivers on our priorities for a healthier Wales, jobs and green growth, opportunity for every family and connecting communities.

The funding we allocate to local authorities from the Active Travel Fund is for schemes that improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes and facilities across Wales. Details of historic allocations can be found here: [Local authority transport grants: what we have funded | GOV.WALES](#).

Most schemes that have been funded benefit walking and wheeling as well as cycling; in fact, there were more schemes focussed solely on walking and wheeling than schemes that were focused solely on cycling. Walking is not a niche activity – over half of adults make walking or wheeling trips of more than 10 minutes at least weekly. We also want more children to be able to walk, wheel, scoot or cycle to school to arrive healthier, happier and ready to learn. Nearly every public transport journey starts and ends with a walking / wheeling leg, but our walking routes are far from ideal. This is why I am requiring local authorities to prioritise the majority of their core allocation from the Active Travel Fund on making immediate improvements like dropped kerbs, new crossings, installation of benches, better signage and removal of barriers.

The total funding of £3,879,376.26 that Sustrans received over the three years referred to in the petition was made up of elements of revenue grant to run the E-move scheme, support Active Travel School Plan development and resources and the healthy workplaces programme. The two former purposes have now concluded. It also includes capital funding,

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which mostly supports local authorities to help them to make improvements under the Paths for Everyone programme to routes in their areas. The funding also includes payments for the Active Journeys programme which is a contract that Sustrans has tendered for and won on a competitive basis.

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

Appeal: Wales Autism Bill 2019 (For the Few, Not the Many)

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 July 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 Gorffennaf 2025

Reference: SR25/11625-3

Petition Number: P-06-1513

Petition title: Appeal: Wales Autism Bill 2019 (For the Few, Not the Many)

Text of petition:

The majority of Labour MSs rejected the Autism (Wales) Bill, despite its potential to significantly improve the lives of autistic people. This petition calls on the Welsh Government to reconsider its stance and prioritize the rights and needs of autistic individuals.

Don't let autistic people be ignored! The Welsh Government must take action to improve their lives. Sign now to demand change and support the rights of autistic individuals

The Autism (Wales) Bill offered crucial protections for autistic people, including a legal framework for autism services, a mandated autism strategy, and an awareness campaign. The Bill aligned with the Human Rights Act, the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act 2015, and UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, emphasizing a rights-based approach to autism.

The current Code of Practice lacks the enforcement mechanisms and specific penalties needed to ensure compliance, leaving autistic individuals vulnerable. The Bill's rejection leaves a significant gap in protecting autistic rights and addressing the challenges they face in accessing services and support.



We urge the Welsh Government to reconsider the Autism (Wales) Bill and prioritize the needs of autistic people. By enacting this legislation, Wales can demonstrate its commitment to inclusivity and the well-being of all its citizens.

1. Background

The [Autism \(Wales\) Bill](#) was a Member Bill introduced by Paul Davies AM in 2018. The Bill aimed to ensure the needs of children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Wales are met, and to protect and promote their rights. The Bill was [scrutinised by the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee](#) but did not progress to Stage 2 of the scrutiny process, following the [Stage 1 vote in the Senedd](#) in January 2019.

The Committee was unable to reach a consensus on whether the Bill was the most appropriate way to achieve the necessary improvements to support services for people with Autism and their families. Some Members believed it was both timely and necessary to put services on a statutory footing to deliver improvements where previous strategies had failed to do so. Other Members felt that more time was needed for existing initiatives and legislation to take effect. There were also concerns about the focus of the Bill, which some stakeholders believed was 'diagnosis-led' rather than 'needs-based'.

Senedd Research has published [a summary of the Autism Bill](#) which sets out the Welsh Government's position on the Bill, and the views of other stakeholders.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government did not support the Autism Bill. During [the debate on the general principles of the Bill](#), the then Minister for Health and Social Services said he believed the Welsh Government already had the legislative powers they needed to deliver the required improvement in autism services.

He also noted concerns from representatives of other neurodevelopmental conditions about the impact that legislation focusing only on autism could have on wider neurodevelopmental services.

Title:

Since 2018, the Welsh Government has taken a number of steps to deliver improvements to autism and wider neurodivergence services. These include:

- publishing an [updated ASD strategy delivery plan](#);
- introducing a statutory [Code of Practice on the delivery of autism services](#); and
- establishing a [Neurodivergence Improvement Programme](#).

The Welsh Government has provided a detailed list of actions taken since September 2021 in their response to the Committee.

In June 2025, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing [gave an update](#) on activity and progress made through the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme, and her priorities for its next phase.

3. Welsh Parliament action

A short debate on the [Women's Institute \(WI\) campaign to support autistic and ADHD women and girls](#) was held in the Senedd on 26 March 2025. Responding to the debate, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing said:

“Our goal is to drive down waiting times for children's neurodevelopmental assessments, and to continue the transformation work to create sustainable, integrated services that better serve neurodivergent individuals and their families”

The Cabinet Secretary for Education was [asked about the support being provided in schools for neurodiverse boys](#) in April 2025. She said:

“One of the things that we're doing at the moment is working with Education Support to develop a new professional learning programme for schools that's focused on developing education practitioners' understanding of neurodivergence, child development, and our whole-school approach to mental health.”

4. Response to the petition

In her response to the Committee on 29 May 2025, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing wrote:

“The Welsh Government does not support the introduction of autism specific legislation as we already have the legislative levers to deliver improvements to autism and wider neurodivergence services.”

She said the Welsh Government had delivered on its commitment to publish a Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services, and provided an update on developments since September 2021.

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-06-1513
Ein cyf/Our ref SM/00270/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee
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29 May 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 May in your capacity as Chair of the Petitions Committee. The Welsh Government does not support the introduction of autism specific legislation as we already have the legislative levers to deliver improvements to autism and wider neurodivergence services. We have delivered on our commitment to publish a Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services, made under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the NHS (Wales) Act 2006.

I would like to update the Committee on the developments in Wales since the launch of this Statutory Code of Practice on 21 September 2021.

Development of a Code of Practice on the Delivery of Neurodivergence Services

As a response to the Members Autism Wales Bill, which was rejected by the Senedd in January 2019, we published a Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services and accompanying guidance in September 2021. Due to the number of people with co-occurring neurodivergent conditions we are now working with stakeholders to expand the Code to include other conditions such as ADHD and Tourettes Syndrome, the Code will also be made under the Additional Learning Needs Act 2018, which strengthens the link with education. We will publish the new Code at the beginning of the next Senedd Term.

To encourage the development of local services, Neurodivergence has also been identified as a priority for the Regional Integration Fund which is designed to promote integration across health and social care.

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To monitor progress and understand the impact of the Code of Practice for the Delivery of Autism Services we commissioned a formal evaluation. The first phase was completed in the Autumn of 2023 with a full report '[Evaluation of the Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#)' published in April 2024.

The first phase of the evaluation evidenced that the implementation of the code is enabling us to build on an already improving service context and that the code has had a significant influence on raising awareness and training in both health and social care services, improvements in awareness raising, the provision of supporting resources and workforce training. An individual report and set of recommendations were provided to each region to ensure further improvements. The second phase examines the improvements made resulting from the recommendations from the first phase and concentrates on service user experience. This will be published later this summer.

Following the very good response to the public consultation survey on the extended Autism Code, launched on the 18 June 2024 and closed on 15 July 2024, officials identified themes for areas of inclusion in the new Neurodivergence Code of Practice. A face to face and virtual engagement programme to discuss the draft Code will commence in the New Year.

Neurodivergence Improvement Programme

In 2021 a demand and capacity review of Neurodivergence (ND) Services, was commissioned to understand the impact of increasing demand on services and children, families and adults seeking assessment and support. This was resulting in lengthening waiting times and it was apparent that there were significant gaps in services for ND conditions other than autism. The report was published in October 2022, which reflected that although the NHS Together for Children and Young People, Neurodivergence workstream which closed in March 2022, had made progress in addressing the pressure on services, further improvement was required. In response, in July 2022 a [Written Statement](#) was issued making a commitment to deliver a Neurodivergence Improvement Programme (NDIP) backed by £12M over three years up to March 2025.

The NDIP led by Welsh Government is taking an integrated, whole system and cross government approach to transformation. It is centred upon a set of guiding principles which have been reviewed by all key stakeholders through our governance structure. These have been shared with Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) to shape the development and delivery of neurodivergence services. RPBs have demonstrated alignment with the principles as a condition of funding.

Collaboration is key to the success of the programme, and we are working closely with a number of key stakeholders. We are working in collaboration with NHS Executive on assessment pathways, with Social Care Wales and with HEIW on workforce. We also work with education and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) colleagues to support the implementation of the ALN transformation, and we have aligned with the [NEST/NYTH](#) for children's mental health and well-being. The programme is also addressing gaps in data collection and scoping digital innovation for assessment services and support.

In November 2022 we provided £1.4million to RPBs to tackle urgent need. In 2023/24 we provided a further circa £2.4 million to RPBs to bring capacity and support transformational change. In 2024/25 circa £4.8 million was provided to RPBs to further test new ways of working and sustain existing services.

Early feedback from neurodivergence services and RPB reporting indicates more positive feedback from families that they feel more supported with greater access to information, advice and resources whilst waiting. However, referral demand is not reducing, and services

still do not have capacity to meet this ever-increasing demand. This is true for adult autism and ADHD services but is a critical situation for children's neurodevelopmental services.

In February 2025 through a [Written Statement](#) we announced a two-year extension for the NDIP programme and policy development backed by a further £13.9M of investment. We will continue to work with our partners to deliver transformational change including driving down long waiting times for children and young people.

National Neurodivergence Team

The National Neurodivergence Team is funded by the Welsh Government and hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association, it is a key partner in the delivery of the Neurodivergence Improvement Programme and wider work such as the evaluation of the Autism Code of Practice.

The team provides oversight of the development of the Integrated Autism Service and works with wider partners such as housing, police, employment services and DWP, raising awareness, providing advice, guidance and specific tools and resources to support them in their work with neurodivergent individuals.

The team is leading the development of early help and support services, this includes working with local authority Information Advice & Assistance (IAA) services, Families First, and third sector organisations to improve access to information, advice and develop models of early help. They have developed specific resources for parents of neurodivergent children with a recent addition of regular advice & consultation sessions with experts in the field of neurodivergence.

Integrated Autism Service

In 2016 we rolled out the Integrated Autism Service across all regions in Wales, providing an assessment and support service for adults. We continue to support this work, and through the ND Improvement Programme we have supported development as the demand continues to grow beyond the capacity to respond.

Digital Enablers & Profiling Tools

Digital enablers are critical in bringing greater efficiency to the provision of information, advice, and assistance, as well as better data collection arrangements and diagnostic and assessment pathways. A previous pilot commissioned in the transition from [Together for children and young People](#) (T4CYP) neurodevelopmental workstream, included the development and initial pilot of a children's neurodevelopmental profiling tool which also formed part of the referral pathway.

Advice from our digital, innovation & technology policy leads was that the initial pilot would have benefited from a discovery phase. We have now concluded a discovery project with the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) on the potential of a range of digital enabler tools, they conclude that there is value in pursuing digital solutions. They have also provided us with a project proposal for an Alpha phase.

The use of the Portsmouth Neurodiversity Profiling Tool is growing across the UK. This resource is owned by Portsmouth University and NHS Trusts so is free to use, however, it is not fully digitalised so still takes a number of hours to complete a profile. At least two Health Boards in Wales are running pilots and have agreed to share their learning. We are also

exploring other tools and work such as the Autistica Research on an autism strengths and differences profile tool due out end of June, the work of Professor Helen Minnis on the Essence D tool in Scotland and work in Newport City Council on a Consideration Tool matrix.

The Neurodivergence Ministerial Advisory Group

This long-standing Autism advisory group has expanded into the Neurodivergence Ministerial Advisory Group to provide expert advice and guidance for the delivery of our policy priorities. This group meets quarterly, it is co-chaired by four people, three of whom have lived experienced of neurodivergence. Membership is varied across statutory services and the third sector, and the group has been attended by Ministers.

Outcome measures and data collection

Knowing how well services are operating is the key to identifying where we can deliver the best improvements. We are working with colleagues in the NHS Executive and Digital Health Care Wales to improve data, for children and young people we want to collect more detailed information on referral and assessment to inform service development. For adults, the Integrated Autism Service collects richer information on referrals, assessment and support.

Welsh Language

Developing a workforce that is better able to meet the growing needs of people through the medium of Welsh is a priority. We know that access to services in Welsh is important, for some clinically, as it can affect their assessment and outcomes, for others it is a matter of respect and dignity. Our Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) are currently looking to better understand the demand and look at the need for the availability of Welsh Language neurodivergent assessment tools. Whilst we know there are significant gaps in availability, we are pleased that the NHS Executives review of Children's Neurodevelopmental Services confirmed most Health Boards in Wales can provide diagnostic assessments in Welsh.

We have also funded a post within the National Centre for Welsh Learning to develop national health and social care neurodivergence terminology, bringing together professionals to provide a pool of Welsh language expertise for assessment and diagnosis across Wales. The National Neurodivergence Team is also linked in with Nottingham University, which has developed a new adult autism diagnostic tool, ACIA. This is currently being translated into Welsh.

Neurodivergence & Mental health

The evaluation of the Autism Code provided recommended that RPBs place a higher level of scrutiny on the delivery of support to neurodivergent people through mental health services. We know that neurodivergence and mental health related issues/conditions are often co-occurring, and we work across government to align neurodivergence and mental health policy, such as the NEDST/Nyth framework for improving mental health for babies, children and young people and their families.

The National Neurodivergence Team, continue to develop training and resources to support individuals, including those with mental health needs, families, and services. They have already developed a CAMHS toolkit for practitioners, e-learning models for all staff, which includes the latest addition to support professionals to adapt their practice when undertaking any type of formal assessment with neurodivergent individuals. These are

readily available via Health Boards training infrastructure and on the National Neurodivergence Team website.

Transition

Transition related issues from child to adult are not an issue exclusive to neurodivergence related services. Nevertheless, we continue to see services have difficulties in managing issues relating to transition, as evidenced by the NHS Executive children's services review. Where necessary, the NHS Executive has provided specific recommendations for improvement to individual Health Boards. The NHS Executive has also provided an overarching recommendation of developing national standards. We have brought these issues to the attention of our Clinical Advisory Group for further consideration.

Women & ADHD/ASD

Neurodivergent conditions present differently in each individual. We know girls and women are more likely to mask their difficulties than boys and men, often mimicking others to appear to fit in. Current screening and assessment tools have been revealed to be biased towards what is often defined as male presentation; however, clinicians understand this and are skilled and able to work with additional evidence bases to make an expert diagnosis. The National Neurodivergence Team has offered training, recently, Dr Jo Steer, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, presented at a Community of Practice on Women and ADHD.

We know that the differences presented by women are being recognised. We have data from the Integrated Autism Service which demonstrates an increase in referral rates for women for both diagnosis and support. Awareness and skills in identifying neurodivergent traits in girls and women is clearly growing resulting in this increase of referrals for women. The national Integrated Autism Service now receives more referrals for women than it does men.

Criminal Justice System and Improving Services in the Secure Estates

Following the UK Government led report 'Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System – A Review of Evidence', the Welsh Government has worked collaboratively with the UK Government Ministry of Justice and the Welsh Government Criminal Justice Team to ensure appropriate levels of support are provided to neurodiverse individuals within the non-devolved secure estate across Wales.

There is now a Neurodiversity Support Manager (NSM) post in every prison in Wales. NSMs are responsible for implementing improved processes for supporting prisoners with neurodivergence needs, ensuring they have the access to tailored support in areas such as education, advice, and work opportunities. We have also undertaken the following work to support the Criminal Justice system:

- The National Neurodivergence Team has developed a basic autism awareness training for emergency services. This has been piloted with North Wales and Dyfed Powys Police. North Wales Police also employ an autistic person as their Equality Officer who has developed further resources that have also been shared.
- Staff from Berwyn Prison have accessed North Wales Integrated Autism Service training.
- Work with probation and the Integrated Autism Services (IAS) has been ongoing throughout Wales.
- Specific housing guidance in relation to supporting autistic tenants has been produced and this resource is available to Resettlement Officers.

- We are engaging with cross-government colleagues responsible for the Prison Health & Social Care Oversight Group and have requested representation on this group.

Adult ADHD Pathway

The Clinical Advisory Group, which sits under the Neurodivergence Ministerial Advisory Group, is leading on the development of an adult ADHD pathway. Initial advice has been disseminated through Regional Partnership Boards on the required delivery and establishment of ADHD services, this includes expectations regarding their alignment with other services, and integration with post diagnostic support and psycho-educational arrangements.

We are in the early stages of developing and piloting a minimum viable data set to begin to understand the true demand for adult ADHD services. Whilst the referral demand for diagnostic assessments is significant and continues to rise, we are also aware of the significant challenge the prescribing and dispensing of ADHD medication, and are working with our colleagues in Primary Care to bring improvements and explore different ways of working to increase availability in the community.

Tourettes Syndrome

Tourette's Syndrome has seen a surge in awareness across Wales. We have continued to meet with families of children with Tourette's Syndrome, and are actively engaging with Tourette's Action, who provide us with advice on best practice models, interventions, and access to e-learning modules. We recently supported the awareness raising campaign for Tourette's Awareness Month, we funded the translation of their posters into the Welsh Language so that these could be shared across Wales.

Several training sessions have been facilitated by the National Neurodivergence Team on Tourette's Syndrome, which provided opportunities to upskill and train our current workforce. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have agreed to look at developing agreed Pathways, this will provide best practice guidance for service development for Health Boards.

Education and Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

There remain barriers to collaborative working and good communication between education and health services and this is an area of concern. Families tell us that the education system, notably schools have a central role in the pathway to ND assessment and support. We are therefore ensuring that the development of the Statutory Code of Practice on Neurodivergence Services will also be made under the ALNET, to strengthen education requirements.

We are supporting the implementation of ALN transformation, supporting colleagues in Pedagogy, Leadership & Professional Learning to develop an improved offer of professional learning to education staff. This work is being undertaken with Bangor University and the National Neurodivergence Team and aligns child development and neurodivergence with the Whole School approach. This includes inset days, undergraduate training and management.

Third Sector Grant Scheme

Two ND organisations have received funding through the Social Services Third Sector Grant Scheme, which is currently in its final year of the current grant round.

National Autistic Society Cymru

The National Autistic Society has developed the peer support available for autistic individuals. This has been achieved by establishing new branches and social groups in local communities and provide the support autistic adults need to form and run their own social groups.

We know autistic individuals will often experience feelings of loneliness and isolation. By setting up or just attending a peer social group, they will be in a safe environment where they meet others with similar interest and life experiences. These newly established groups will make a real and positive difference to the lives of autistic people by providing person-centred community activities and reduce the loneliness and social isolation that they experience and help members to grow in confidence.

Autism Spectrum Connections Cymru (ASCC)

ASCC provide a one stop shop - a responsive, flexible, person centred support for autistic adults in the areas of pre-employment and benefits, they offer a programme of regular targeted activities to support autistic individuals, these include employment workshops, face to face sessions around benefit support, support to access education/training courses, employability support, support to retain existing employment and to achieve volunteering or work-based experience.

ASCC has established joint working with the Integrated Autism Service (IAS) in Gwent and Cardiff and the Vale. The work that ASCC relieves the pressures on the IAS around employment and benefit support. They have developed simple referral pathways with the IAS ensuring support is focused and not duplicated. Outside the scope of the grant, ASCC also supports autistic individuals to access social opportunities and provide wellbeing activities and drop-in services.

I am confident that the Committee can agree that the evidence of progress and improvement demonstrates effective delivery and the significant impact of the Welsh Government policy approach, strengthened by the introduction of the statutory Autism Code of Practice. Our focus has been to direct available resources in the continued delivery of improvement on the ground, rather than taking forward primary legislation which is not required. We will continue our transformation of ND services through the delivery of the NDIP programme and development of the Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Services.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sarah Murphy AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025

Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: SR25/11480/6

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1529

Petition title: Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030.

Text of petition:

By delaying the implementation of the act, there would be time to fully consult with the public and see what they really think of the cost and the benefits.

The Welsh Government has admitted that, “in the timescale available for developing the legislation it was not possible to undertake its own open public consultation on either the general concepts of Senedd Reform or a draft Bill.”

- Page 91 of the Explanatory Memorandum to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill <https://senedd.wales/media/ixjdywtx/pri-ld16037-em-e.pdf>

Implementing the additional members will cost upwards of £80 million.

All information costing etc has come from the act all 352 pages, which I have read. I have looked at the Reform Committee work and have emailed the chair Mr Rees with my observations. I have quoted the observations in the act by Sir Bernard Crick, “Too many members risks becoming bloated and inefficient”. I



have noted that the only benefit of the act is improved scrutiny mentioned 78 times and the sharing of ministerial cars mentioned once.

I have sat on many scrutiny meetings and I am of the view that the whole scrutiny system needs overhauling and a complete root and branch review needs to be carried out in every form of government.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

The [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Act 2024](#) made several reforms to the Senedd through amending [the Government of Wales Act 2006](#). As part of these reforms, there will be an increase in the number of Members elected to the Senedd in May 2026, from 60 to 96.

More information on Senedd reform can be [found here](#).

2. Welsh Government action

While the Welsh Government [did state in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill that](#) “it was not possible” to undertake an open public consultation on either the general concepts of Senedd Reform or a draft Bill, it did note that it undertook:

- Targeted bilateral engagement with external stakeholders to ensure officials were cognisant of their views on key issues; and
- Early and detailed engagement with the electoral administrator community, ensuring that administrative concerns could be fed into the legislation design process.

The explanatory memorandum [further notes that](#) “while the Welsh Government was not able to undertake its own public consultation, in developing the legislation it has considered the wealth of information on the public’s views on Senedd Reform, as expressed in a series of consultations undertaken over the last twenty years”. These consultations include work undertaken for:

- The 2004 [Commission on the Powers and Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales](#) (the Richard Commission);
- The 2014 [Commission on Devolution in Wales](#) (the Silk Commission);
- The 2017 [report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform](#);
- A 2018 [consultation undertaken by the Senedd Commission](#);
- The 2020 [report by the Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform](#);
- The 2022 [report by the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform](#); and
- A 2022 [consultation undertaken by the Senedd’s Business Committee](#).

In addition, the Member in charge of the Bill, the former Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, Mick Antoniw MS, [noted that](#) parties had made commitments to Senedd reform in their manifestos. On whether manifesto commitments provided enough detail on what reform would look like, he said:

...I think the public support that we seek is for the reform. The precise detail of the mechanics is one that I think you have to work out within a constitutional structure, and this is what this Bill does—it creates a constitutional structure that delivers, I think, a recognition that there was a need for reform, there was a need to change, a need to increase the size...

When asked whether the Welsh Government would take additional steps to assess public support for the proposals in the Bill, the Member in charge again referred to manifesto commitments from Welsh Labour, Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Liberal Democrats. He added that “consideration had been given during the development of the Bill to previous consultations undertaken by other bodies”.

2.1. Welsh Government response

In response to the petition, the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, repeated the aforementioned comments found in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill – that in developing its legislation, the Welsh Government “considered a wealth of information on the public’s views on Senedd Reform, as expressed in a series of consultations undertaken over the last twenty years”. She also noted the consultation undertaken by the Senedd’s Reform Bill Committee on the Bill’s proposals (see below).

With regards to the petitioner’s comments on the need for review of the scrutiny system, the First Minister noted the recent report of the Future Senedd Committee on parliamentary business in the next Senedd.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd scrutinised proposals in the then Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill. The Reform Bill Committee led the Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill.

As part of its scrutiny, the Committee held a public consultation between 21 September and 3 November 2023, which received nearly 500 responses. The Committee also held oral evidence sessions with a range of stakeholders including the Member in charge of the Bill, elections academics and electoral administrators.

In its report on the Bill, the Committee acknowledged the views of the public who responded to its consultation and noted the petition signed by (then) over 15,000 people opposing the Bill (the final number was over 21,000).

In light of the upcoming changes to the Senedd, the Future Senedd Committee has considered how a bigger Senedd could improve scrutiny, strengthen accountability and broaden representation.

The Committee published its final report in May 2025, making a series of recommendations to the Senedd's Business Committee.

3.1. Review of the Act

The reforms to the size of the Senedd and its voting system will likely be reviewed during the next Senedd. The *Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024* requires the Llywydd to table a motion within 6 months of the first meeting of the next Senedd, to propose that the Senedd establishes a committee to review Parts 1 and 2 of the Act, as well as the “extent to which the elements of a healthy democracy are present in Wales”.

4. Delaying the implementation to 2030

In order to delay the increase in Senedd Members to 2030, primary legislation would need to be introduced to amend the *Government of Wales Act 2006* accordingly. Such legislation would need to be passed before the end of this Senedd term.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1529
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/00327/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions Committee

02 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

I am writing in response to your letter of 2 May 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1529 - *Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030*.

The compelling case for Senedd reform has been made in a succession of expert reports. The role and responsibilities of the Senedd have changed considerably since it was first established in 1999, and its additional powers, including primary law-making powers and tax-varying powers, mean that there is a greater pressure on its existing capacity.

The Senedd is currently the smallest of all the devolved legislatures in the UK and has remained the same size since the establishment of the National Assembly in 1999, despite assuming significant additional powers. The Scottish Parliament has 129 Members, and the Northern Ireland Assembly has 90.

As a result, and following several independent reports recommending more Members, the Senedd in June 2022 voted by a two-thirds majority in favour of taking forward the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform's report [Reforming our Senedd: A stronger voice for the people of Wales](#), published in May 2022. This report included a recommendation that the Senedd should have 96 Members to reflect the way its role and responsibilities have grown.

The **Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act**, which will deliver the majority of changes recommended by the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform, was passed by a supermajority of Members, and was given Royal Assent on 24 June 2024.

In developing the legislation, the Welsh Government considered a wealth of information on the public's views on Senedd Reform, as expressed in a series of consultations undertaken over the last twenty years. A summary of these consultations is detailed in the publicised [Explanatory Memorandum](#) to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill.

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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.

As part of its scrutiny of this legislation the Senedd's Reform Bill Committee also held a [public consultation on the Bill](#), which closed on 3 November 2023.

Turning to the suggestion included in the detail of the petition, that '*the whole scrutiny system needs overhauling and a complete root and branch review needs to be carried out in every form of government*', the Future Senedd Committee was established on 16 October 2024, with a remit to consider and report on three aspects of the organisation of Senedd business. One of these aspects was the following

'a. the organisation of business in the Seventh Senedd, with the objective of identifying options that increase the effectiveness of its scrutiny activity, the efficiency of its day-to-day delivery of business, and the accessibility of parliamentary business to Members;

The Committee published its final report, '[Parliamentary business in the Seventh Senedd](#)' on 9 May 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the petition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Eluned Morgan

P-06-1529 Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030 - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07 July 2025

First May I state that I must be one of the very few people in Wales who have read this act 3 times all 352 pages it is obvious from seeing the first minister's comments she hasn't read it.

Comment expert reports no evidence by who and when

Comment we are the smallest with 3.5 million population only slightly larger than Birmingham 60 Senedd members 29 MPs and 1400 councillors Sir Bernard Crick Sheffield university says in the act a bigger and bloated assembly doesn't equate to more efficiency

Comment Independent reports where are they some were compiled years ago no evidence again .

Comment The act had no pre legislative scrutiny no public consultation no referendum as one MP pointed out on May the 8th 2024 if we have a referendum we will lose isn't that Democracy. In the act it says Royal Assent will take place in 2025 not 3 weeks after why the rush. The act says no time for public consultation 2 years since then there has been 140 public consultations

Comment reform committee carried out consultation I have looked at 17 meetings and 17 times the public have been excluded once at the very start no public consultation there

Comment Increased scrutiny I have attended over 350 scrutiny meetings and they are a joke

In the act it mentions extra scrutiny 83 times as the only evidence for more members and twice for the sharing of ministerial cars some benefits there. At a recent scrutiny meeting televised on the BBC the first minister refused to answer questions from the chairman shamefully. The only effective scrutiny in the UK is the Jury system

In conclusion I would like to thank the officers of the petitions committee Mr Price and Kayleigh Imperato for their support and assistance in this matter superb people many thanks Lyndon Walker could you confirm receipt of this email.

P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales - Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: RS25/11480

Introduction

Petition Number: [P-06-1530](#)

Petition title: Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents

Text of petition:

“Childcare Providers across Wales are at risk of closing due to an unsustainable funding model imposed by the Welsh Government. The flat rate schemes do not cover the true costs of delivering childcare and providers are not allowed to charge the parent the true cost of care when it exceeds the set rate. Since every setting operates differently, many are being forced to run at a loss. This is despite Welsh Government regulations stating our businesses must be sustainable to safeguard our children.

What This Means For You



✘ Without urgent change, many Childcare Providers will be forced to close leaving childcare employees without employment.

✘ Fewer quality childcare provisions mean fewer childcare places, longer waiting lists, leaving families unable to access childcare including Childcare Offer & Flying Start places.

✘ Parents may have to cut working hours or leave jobs due to a lack of childcare and what places are left will charge higher costs to the paying parents as Childcare Providers look to re-coup losses.

✘ Children will lose access to vital early years education that shapes their future, a fact that Welsh Government promotes this when highlighting their scheme when looking to attract your votes.

Settings have closed already!

Childcare Providers should not have to fight to survive. Families should not have to struggle to find care for their children. If we don't act now, the future of Childcare and Early Years Education in Wales is at serious risk."

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Background

There has been much scrutiny about the hourly rate paid to providers in Wales who deliver childcare as part of Welsh Government's free provision.

In April 2022 the hourly rates paid to providers increased from £4.50 an hour to £5.00, and remained at this level until it increased in April 2025.

From April 2025 the rate is £6.40 an hour.

Welsh Government has committed to review this rate annually from now on.

- A survey of providers in this Early Years Wales report into the childcare rate for Wales 2025 found respondents' perceptions of what the effective rate would be for their business varied from £7/hour to £10/hour. Inflation, increased wage costs and changes to employer national insurance contributions were cited as concerns. The survey also sets out the percentage of respondents saying their business is sustainable over time.
- While welcoming the increase, the National Day Nurseries Association Cymru says the new funding rate for Wales of £6.40 is 'expected to still leave most private nurseries with a shortfall'.
- Funding is provided using a different methodology elsewhere in the UK. In England, the national average hourly funding rates for local authorities for three and four-year-olds in 2025-26 is reported to be £6.12 per hour and increases for younger age groups. Latest statistics show the hourly rates paid to providers in Scotland in 2024-25 for three to five year olds was £6.55 per hour.

Welsh Parliament action

The Equality and Social Justice Committee has undertaken scrutiny of childcare provision during this Sixth Senedd publishing two reports. Both include commentary of a number of issues relevant to the petition, including its findings on the main challenges facing the childcare sector in Wales.

2022 report

The 2022 report [Minding the future: The childcare barrier facing working parents](#) said:

The role that childcare workers play in early years development is key; however pay does not match the responsibilities of the role. Providers told us that increasing the hourly payment they receive under the Childcare Offer is a good way to boost wages, to attract new people into the sector and improve retention in the existing workforce.

It recommended:

Recommendation 14. We recommend that Welsh Government sets out in its response its plan to deliver a sufficient increase in the hourly payment to providers under the Childcare Offer to enable an increase in staff pay, and a timeframe by which all childcare workers will be paid the Real Living Wage, learning from the Scottish Government's incorporation of this into their childcare expansion plans.

The Welsh Government [accepted this recommendation](#) and from April 2022 [increased the hourly rate paid to providers from £4.50 to £5.00](#).

2024 report

The 2024 report [Their Future: Our Priority?](#) included examining how childcare providers and the workforce have been impacted by cost-of-living pressures, and what effects these had on the sector.

The Committee heard “serious concerns” about the hourly rate paid to childcare providers despite the increase to £5.00 an hour as of April 2022.

It referred to a [paper on the funding rate by Early Years Wales](#), published March 2024, which suggested:

- 94% of providers do not think the hourly rate covers their costs.
- Almost all providers believe the hourly rate should be reviewed each year or go up in line with inflation.

The Equality and Social Justice Committee went on to recommend:

Recommendation 9. The Welsh Government should act with urgency to shore up the financial sustainability of the sector by:

** Making an announcement on the hourly rate paid to Childcare Offer providers for 2025-26 by the end of October 2024. Based on all of the evidence we have received, we expect to see, and call on the Welsh Their Future: Our Priority? Follow up inquiry into childcare provision in Wales 10 Government to provide, a significant increase in the Childcare Offer hourly rate for 2025-26.*

** Moving to annual reviews of the Childcare Offer hourly rate, and ensuring that the methodology for conducting these reviews takes a flexible approach that considers all relevant factors such as inflation, rates of pay and productivity.*

The [Welsh Government's response](#) in August 2024 rejected the first part of this recommendation, saying a review was underway at that time but an announcement could not be made by the end of October due to evidence gathering and analysis being on-going.

Welsh Government accepted the second part of the recommendation 'in principle', saying:

*Taking into account the views of the sector **we will move to annual reviews** following the completion of the current three year review later this year; this approach is intended to support the sector with planning and improve sustainability. Annual reviews will need to be accommodated within existing resources and as a consequence this may impact on the methodology we are able to adopt. It should also be noted that implementing the findings of the reviews will be subject to annual budget considerations. [Bold is our emphasis]*

On 20 November 2024. Welsh Government issued a [Written Statement: Childcare Offer for Wales: Rates Review](#) confirming it would “**move to annual reviews following the completion of the current three-year review**”.

Increase in hourly rate from April 2025

In December 2024 Welsh Government published a further [Written Statement: Review of the Childcare Offer for Wales hourly rate and continued support for Flying Start childcare](#) (the bold is our emphasis).

*To continue supporting this sector, we are **increasing the hourly rate paid to childcare providers from £5.00 to £6.00 per hour.** This 20% increase will take effect from 7 April 2025 – the first Monday of the new financial year. We will also be providing additional funding to support the continued alignment of Nursery Education and Flying Start childcare.*

*We have also reviewed the guidance for providers on permissible food charges. We must carefully balance what is affordable for the provider and affordable for parents whilst recognising continued pressure in food, utility and energy prices. This is why, from April 2025, the **daily rate for food will increase from £9.00 to £10.80.***

It also pointed to [Written Statement: Making 100% Small Business Rates Relief for registered childcare premises permanent](#) published the previous month.

Hourly rate increase to £6.40 from April 2025

Welsh Government's [Final Budget 2025 to 2026](#) was published on 20 February and confirmed the **actual increase to the hourly rate from £5.00 to £6.40** for childcare providers for this current year. This media release provides some more detail: [Budget agreement secures extra £100m for public services](#)

The [Final Budget 2025-2026: explanatory note](#) says as below:

The funding will also support a further uplift in the hourly rate to £6.40 for childcare, to support providers with cost pressures. This is in addition to our recent announcement about moving to annual rate reviews from 2025-26 and our decision to make 100% rates relief for all childcare premises permanent.

This is an additional increase to £6.40 per hour from the initial increase to £6.00 per hour (from £5.00) for the hourly rate for the Childcare Offer (as first announced in this [Review of the Childcare Offer for Wales hourly rate](#) issued on 11 December 2024) .

Welsh Government response to this petition

In her response to the Petitions Committee (23 May 2025), the Minister for Children and Social Care says:

In 2025-26, the Welsh Government will be investing over £150m to sustain and grow high quality childcare in Wales. This support underlines our commitment to the sector here in Wales.

Other points include references to recent announcements of:

- The increased hourly rate for childcare providers delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales by from £5.00 to £6.40 per hour from April 2025.
- A 20% uplift in permissible food charges to support providers who offer meals to children receiving the Childcare Offer.
- 100% Small Business Rates Relief for registered childcare premises, which the letter says leads to 'saving settings circa £3m per annum'.

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-06-1530
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00278/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

23 May 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 May concerning the petition submitted to the Senedd by Lisa Owen.

We know that affordable, available and accessible childcare enables parents to work. Our Childcare Offer supports our drive to increase economic growth, by supporting low-income parents, particularly mothers back into the workplace or to increase their hours of work. This assists our efforts to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.

In 2025-26, the Welsh Government will be investing over £150m to sustain and grow high quality childcare in Wales. This support underlines our commitment to the sector here in Wales.

I appreciate the support from childcare providers who choose to participate in our government-funded childcare programs. Although these schemes are voluntary, I respect and appreciate the vital role these providers play in offering accessible childcare to parents in Wales.

As you will know, in April this year we increased the hourly rate for childcare providers delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales by 28%, raising it from £5.00 to £6.40 per hour. Alongside the hourly rate increase, we implemented a 20% uplift in permissible food charges to support providers who offer meals to children receiving the Childcare Offer. This adjustment helps ensure affordability for both providers and parents. I have also announced that we are transitioning to an annual rate review for our Childcare Offer, which will aid the sector in planning and enhance sustainability. We are also providing additional funding to support the continued alignment of nursery education, and the Final Budget for 2025-26 included over £25m of additional funding for further expansion of high-quality Flying Start childcare across Wales.

Registered childcare providers in Wales now have certainty regarding business rates. I have announced permanent 100% Small Business Rates Relief for registered childcare premises saving settings circa £3m per annum.

This package of measures underlines our support for childcare in Wales and our ongoing aim for settings to be financially sustainable, as set out in the [review and refresh](#) of our 10-year Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care

P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 04 July 2025

Dear Petitions Committee

It was extremely disappointing to read the Minister's response as it is the same response we were originally given by the Childcare Offer team 6 months ago, so it appears that despite the information passed on from us through letters, via CWLWM and FSB (Federation of Small Business), nothing has been heard.

Funding Schemes which are Education, Childcare Offer and now the new Flying Start scheme are between Welsh Government and the Parent, so why are the childcare providers having to fund the difference between the rate Welsh Government have decided and the rate the setting needs to charge to be sustainable. If the parent chooses to pick a larger setting with extra facilities and therefore larger overheads instead of a childminder operating from their home or a playgroup that rents a hall, then they should pay the difference, which is as it has always been, simply parental choice.

Please note, we are not asking for an increased rate but for Welsh Government to give us back our businesses by allowing us to charge shortfalls if required, so we can protect the longevity of the business and the future jobs of our teams. We want them to engage with us about the sector because as the group of Child Care Providers that have come together trying to protect their businesses, has grown, we are finding more and more discrepancies in how funding is rolled out throughout Wales in the Child Care sector, but I know we are here to address the issue about the Fixed Rate and the refusal to allow us to charge the shortfall.

I have put the Ministers response in red and addressed it individually

We know that affordable, available and accessible childcare enables parents to work. Our Childcare Offer supports our drive to increase economic growth, by supporting low-income parents, particularly mothers back into the workplace or to increase their hours of work. This assists our efforts to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.

While it's appreciated that the Childcare Offer is to help parents to get parents back into work, in reality parents will have already gone back to work and have been paying our rate for at least a year when their child becomes eligible. From experience then these parents simply increase the number of hours their child attends. I completely support the fact that all parents should have support towards childcare, but I should not be expected to subsidise this through my income and at the risk of losing my business. How will it help the 200+ parents of my 100 children when I have to close my doors due to the losses incurred?

Since the introduction of Education hours, Childcare providers have been expected to implement these schemes and subsidise the difference in the rate that was offered and the rate we need to charge. There have not been many of settings that have chosen to provide the 10- 12.5 hours (depending where you are) of Education due to the extra staff you need to complete assessments, cover extra training and complete paperwork that is required. We factor those losses in when doing our financial forecasts. However with the introduction of

the Childcare Offer this now means the losses per child per hour increase from 10 – 30. 3 year old groups are quite large and generally 50% of your business.

I appreciate the support from childcare providers who choose to participate in our government-funded childcare programs. Although these schemes are voluntary, I respect and appreciate the vital role these providers play in offering accessible childcare to parents in Wales.

We “chose” to take part in the Childcare Offer because it supported our parents, although we didn’t realise how much paperwork would be required and that we would have to work more hours or employ an extra member of staff. When we enrolled, the rate the Welsh Government offered was far in advance of the rates our settings were charging. No we didn’t increase our rates, we simply knew we weren’t under any threat, but we didn’t know that they could freeze the rate for 3 years when they “chose” to which they did. If we withdraw, any grants that a setting may have applied for in the previous years will have to be paid back, so some settings have no choice to remain until they are forced to close. Yes they have changed the terms and conditions to state that the rate will be reviewed each year but to review doesn’t mean they will increase, so that isn’t at all reassuring. What happens when the wage rate increases each year say by 10% but the review gives us a 2% increase. We know we are playing our part and that is why we are fighting for a change in its delivery as we don’t want parents to lose out.

As you will know, in April this year we increased the hourly rate for childcare providers delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales by 28%, raising it from £5.00 to £6.40 per hour. Alongside the hourly rate increase, we implemented a 20% uplift in permissible food charges to support providers who offer meals to children receiving the Childcare Offer.

It is getting increasingly annoying that the Minister keeps writing that the rate was increased by 28%.

but missing out the fact that in April 2022 the rate was frozen for 3 years.

For 3 years our overheads increased each year and our income dropped, money we will never be able to re-coup, a position we now cannot ever be in again.

In April 2025 they increased the rate from 2022 by 28% when wages in that same period increased by 37% plus the increase in Employers National Insurance to 15%.

We focus on wages as a minimum of 60% of our turnover goes towards staff wages due to CIW staffing regulations so that is a substantial impact.

Yes there has been an increase in the meals and extras charges but the amount will depend on the hours the child attends and in no way makes any substantial difference.

I have just had my accounts for year ending 2025 completed and I can see the impact in my income. My income growth was around 20% per year which left me with an operating profit to allow me to re-invest and to keep a business reserve as required by a limited company.

The freeze dropped that income and my profit which has meant

- I have had to stop an investment project that I was going to do as I need to put that money in my reserves

- Going forward I will be unable to take on and train apprentices (and we won an award last year for the way we train and the amount of people that we train) because every penny counts.
- Staff who qualify as Childcare Practitioners have received the Real Living Wage which I will be unable to do going forward.

These all stopped because Welsh Government will not allow me to charge what I need to be sustainable. Note my income hasn't dropped due to a drop in numbers of children, purely because of the Childcare Offer fixed rate.

Through the years that rate was frozen, that flat rate and the inability to charge the shortfall to parents, I lost about £75,000 in income, £50,000 of which was a pot I was building to build an extension for a disabled toilet, which will never happen now.

Note the Terms and Conditions for Childcare Offer state *"Financial Point 21 Clear procedures are in place to ensure financial stability. The provider will need to ensure that should financial sustainability be jeopardised, that the Council's Family Information Service and Childcare Offer Team is notified without delay so that support can be provided where reasonable practical"* well we have been doing that for 2 years and no-one cares.

Care Inspectorate Wales Minimum Standards Standard 17 states *"Financial procedures Outcomes Children and their parents are safeguarded by the registered person operating sound financial procedures. The registered person is responsible for ensuring that effective financial procedures are operated."* How can we do that when you have taken over the over control with no knowledge or interest how the individual settings operate.

The Ministers and Childcare Offer team response is that there are grants out there, but these are for specific items and not for loss of income due to the inability to be able to charge the shortfall. That is no way to run a business anyway.

We are also providing additional funding to support the continued alignment of nursery education, and the Final Budget for 2025-26 included over £25m of additional funding for further expansion of high-quality Flying Start childcare across Wales.

This does not answer our issue. Yes they increased the 10 hours of Education rate in line with the Childcare Offer rate but it still means we are operating at a loss. The funding for parents for 2 year olds is being rolled out through the Flying Start programme, a scheme started to support disadvantaged parents, which will now be watered down sadly. Many of us will not be taking on Flying Start settings due to the way we have been treated through the Childcare Offer and it will mean the whole setting is running at a loss.

Registered childcare providers in Wales now have certainty regarding the business rates. I have announced permanent 100% Small Business Rates Relief for registered childcare premises saving settings circa £3m per annum.

Yes we are all thankful for that because if they hadn't done that my business, along with many others, would have had to close almost immediately

Other discrepancies which Ministers have been made aware of but are being ignored While settings were losing money in Newport as Newport would not let us charge the shortfall, in the Vale of Glamorgan(that we know of), they were allowed to do so. So we lost money and they didn't. When Welsh Government were made aware, a meeting was arranged with Local Authorities and Welsh Government updated their guidance to LA's

They then updated provider T&C's and we had to agree to that update through the portal or we would not have been able to submit our current claim as we had to agree in the portal or could not go any further.

It shows that parents in the Vale were prepared to pay the shortfall for their choice of setting. Every parent in my setting has said they would pay just to ensure my doors stayed open. What parent would object to a bill dropping from £312 per week to £56 for the setting of their choice.

We ran a parental survey about the Childcare Offer – Out of 565 responses which includes Flying Start settings

Question : If your childcare provider had the option to charge the shortfall between the rate set by Welsh Government and the settings rate needed to cover costs, in order for their business to be sustainable, what would you do

211 – I would pay the shortfall to keep my child in the setting and allow them to continue offering the quality childcare at the setting I chose for them

196 – I would pay the shortfall only if it meant that the alternative is losing my child's place

175 – I would be unable to pay the shortfall, even if this meant losing my child's place at the setting

If your childcare provider is unable to meet costs, which of the following impacts would you be most worried about seeing

234 Closure ; 125 Reducing staff to minimum ratios; 110 employing less experienced staff; 51 inadequate resources; 25 limited activities and events; 24 lack of opportunity to re-invest into the setting

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Everyone I have spoken to outside Welsh Government completely understands our position and how simply this can be rectified. I hope you can see how unreasonable it is to expect a business to support your scheme and then be destroyed by it. I have run my setting for 25 years. We are one of 3 in Wales who gained excellent in all 6 areas in the new Joint CIW and Estyn Inspections. I am not rich, Nuseries are no longer "honey pots" due to the huge amount of regulations we have to adhere to and the training that we have to fund. Everyone is quick enough to say we are expensive but they are expensive to operate. You can't cut staff, turn the heating down, buy cheaper materials. It's a passion and we do what we do to survive. We don't want more money from you, we just want you to leave us alone to run our businesses as they need to be run. Engage with us as settings. CWLWM are not our representatives, they are yours. But if you don't want to take that time, then just leave us alone and let us charge the shortfall.

If you need any further information I am at your disposal.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Owen

4th July 2025

Agenda Item 3.1

P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales

This petition was submitted by Janet Paterson, having collected a total of 1,334 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We are concerned that the current services for people with epilepsy living in Wales are not providing people with the help and support they need.

Epilepsy Action recommends a caseload of no more than 250 people per Epilepsy Specialist Nurse (ESN), in order to minimise the effects of their condition and provide the best possible care. Currently no area in Wales is meeting this recommendation.

There is a lack of ESNs and waiting times to see neurologists are over 12 months in many areas.

Additional Information:

Increasing the number of ESNs in all health boards across Wales would help significantly improve access to services and the support that people with epilepsy receive.

ESNs are vital team members providing care to people with epilepsy. They work alongside consultant neurologists and other healthcare professionals to provide essential advice and support during and, as importantly, in-between appointments.

ESNs are often the first point of contact for people with epilepsy who require advice or support related to their condition and their contribution is invaluable. The crucial role of epilepsy specialist nurses in caring for and supporting people with epilepsy is set out in Epilepsy Action's recent ESPENTE report <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/research/espente>

In addition to increasing the number of ESNs, all epilepsy services in Wales need more funding to ensure that people with epilepsy receive the support and care they need.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Arfon
- North Wales

04/07/2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update to the Petitions Committee on the progress – and ongoing challenges – related to health services for people with epilepsy in Wales.

Since our original petition was submitted, Epilepsy Action has continued to work with people affected by epilepsy across Wales, as well as with clinicians and policymakers, to push for system-wide improvements in care. In May 2025, we published a new evidence-based report, [Seizing Change: A Review of Epilepsy Services in Wales \(2025\)](#), which presents a stark picture of continuing gaps, despite the welcome attention the issue has received in the Senedd.

Key findings from the 2025 review:

- **Prevalence is increasing**, with an estimated **36,000 people** now living with epilepsy in Wales – a higher rate than in England or Scotland.
- **NICE guidelines are routinely missed**: only **57%** of patients are referred to a specialist clinic after a first seizure, and **all Health Boards** fail to meet the two-week target.
- There is a **severe workforce shortage**: Wales has just **14 Epilepsy Specialist Nurses (ESNs)** (some part-time) and **12.5 neurologists** to support tens of thousands of patients. Some Health Boards, such as Powys, have no dedicated Neurology services at all.
- **Mental health needs are not being met**: over **80% of people** report that epilepsy has negatively affected their mental health, with **31%** experiencing suicidal thoughts. Yet two-thirds wait **up to six months** for help.
- **Inequality is entrenched**: people in rural or deprived areas face serious barriers to care, including poor transport, missed appointments, long waits, and lower-quality support.

What patients told us:

People described trying to access epilepsy care in Wales as like “navigating a maze.” They spoke of:

- **Long travel times** to reach neurologists – often only available in urban centres;
- **Months between appointments** even for those with frequent seizures;
- **Poor communication and follow-up** between primary care and specialists;

- And a sense that epilepsy is “ignored” in the system compared to other long-term conditions.

Positive steps

We welcome the recent Senedd debate on epilepsy services, the support of Members such as Luke Fletcher MS, and the recognition that these issues deserve urgent attention. We are also proud of our pilot **epilepsy counselling service**, funded through the National Lottery, which has supported over 100 people with specialist mental health input and received 100% positive feedback.

What still needs to happen

Despite these developments, we remain deeply concerned about the pace of change. We are calling on the Welsh Government to:

1. Introduce a **waiting-time guarantee** for epilepsy referrals and treatment;
2. Fund a **national epilepsy workforce plan**, including ESNs and specialist neurologists;
3. Expand access to **third-sector mental health support**;
4. Tackle **epilepsy inequalities** in rural and low-income communities;
5. Strengthen **primary care pathways** and referral guidance.

These measures are not only urgent, but cost-effective. Delayed care currently results in avoidable A&E attendances, missed employment, and poorer outcomes – costing Wales an estimated **£100 million per year**.

We hope Members will consider these findings carefully and recommend stronger action from the Welsh Government. We would welcome the opportunity to present the report to the Committee in more detail if useful.

Thank you once again for your continued support for people with epilepsy in Wales.

Agenda Item 3.2

P-06-1288 Deliver Magor and Undy Walkway Station, part of the Burns Delivery Programme, as a quick win

This petition was submitted by Paul Turner, having collected 297 signatures online and 250 on paper, making for a total of 547 signatures collected.

Text of Petition:

We urge the Welsh Government to expedite the opening of Magor and Undy Walkway Station, as a 'quick win' in the delivery of the lord Burns report. The station is needed now, with the population of Magor with Undy rapidly expanding and shortly becoming a town.

Magor Action Group on Rail (M.A.G.O.R.) has been campaigning for 10 years to restore a railway station to the communities of Magor and Undy. It has had massive community support and the full backing of local politicians in the County, Senedd and from our MP. This resulted in it being included in the Burns Report Recommendations and its inclusion in the Burns Delivery Programme. We believe this would be a 'quick win' because it is a technically simple and cost-effective element of the plan.

The full history of the campaign is available on our website – magorstation.co.uk.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Newport East
- South Wales East

P-06-1288 Deliver Magor and Undy Walkway Station, part of the Burns Delivery Programme, as a quick win - Petitioner to the Committee, 04 July 2025

Good morning, Kayleigh,

Thank you for enquiring whether there was an update on the meeting with Ken Skates (Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales).

The meeting did take place but was, in my opinion, somewhat disappointing for a number of reasons.

The face-to-face meeting had been kindly brokered by John Griffiths MS and his staff. Two of our members travelled to the Senedd, while two others (including myself) were happy to 'Teams in'. At some point prior to the meeting, we were informed that Ken Skates would not be at the Senedd but would also join virtually as he was travelling. The meeting started at the scheduled time but without our two members and John Griffiths MS (that were actually at the Senedd) not being in attendance. The meeting was scheduled for 30 minutes but the first thing Ken said was that he wouldn't be able to stay to the end and that the pre-submitted questions would have to be picked up with his support staff. Not a great start!

As our main representatives weren't in the meeting, I thought I would open by reminding Ken that when he visited the MAGOR group, some 8 years ago, and he had then said that there were 46 new stations planned for Wales and 12 of them were priority (including Magor & Undy Walkway – which had a strong business case) but here we are now with no clear indication of if and when the station would be built! He made the point that there had been no money coming from the previous UK government for new stations and that as rail isn't 'devolved' it wasn't his responsibility. However, he did claim that he had now secured funding for a range of rail projects in Wales. [Incidentally, some 19 new stations have been opened on the UK rail network since 2018. Some may argue that the lack of funding for stations in Wales has perhaps been down to not enough proactive and collaborative working with the UK government]. At this point, some 10 minutes in, John Griffiths MS and the two MAGOR members (Ted Hand and Laurence Hando), appeared on Teams so I stopped talking to allow Ted and Laurence to contribute. Similar points were reiterated but the main issue was there is still no clarity of what stations are going to be built and when. Ken made the point that the business case was dependent on the relief lines being upgraded and that all 5 stations are part of the project. Unfortunately, the cost of upgrading the relief lines and building all 5 stations (and a few other rail projects in Wales) significantly exceeds the £460m 'secured' by the Welsh government and, worryingly, the upgrade has not been mentioned in the Spring Spending review. So, in that case it is difficult to understand how the stations can be built.

Ted and Laurence made the point, as has been made numerous times, that 'Magor' does not require any changes to the current rail and signalling arrangements, or the relief line upgrade, and could be built 'today' for around £10m – so would be a 'quick win' for

WG. This point seems to fall on deaf ears and, as the whole infrastructure plans are under DfT and Network Rail, Ken repeatedly reminded us that it wasn't his responsibility. This attitude was disappointing and uninspiring. The 'all or nothing' mantra also appeared to be supported by Catrin Mayby (MCC's cabinet member with responsibility for rail).

As the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales claims to be unable to help, in my opinion, MAGOR's best approach from here on is to deal with UK Government directly, via Catherine Fookes MP (who, like her predecessor Jessica Morden MP has been very proactive in the matter), and Lord Hendy (Minister of State for Transport). Perhaps that might result in a stronger degree of direction coming from the UK government. My personal opinion is that, if that doesn't happen, WG will simply spend the allocated sum on planning and reviewing (with little doing)!

I hope this helps inform the Petitions Committee.

(This response has been reviewed by 4 other members of the MAGOR group)

Kind regards,

Paul Turner

MAGOR group

Agenda Item 3.3

P-06-1365 Re-open railway lines to connect the north and south of Wales

This petition was submitted by Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn, having collected a total of 12,936 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Travelling between the North and the South of Wales is always a long journey, especially when using the railway. If a person is traveling between the Bangor and Cardiff, one has to go outside of Wales on rail to be able to complete the journey.

Wales needs to be connected internally by rail. The plan to do this would be to reopen the Bangor – Afon-wen and Aberystwyth to Carmarthen lines, and integrating them with the Cambrian railway, and the line from Carmarthen on to Cardiff

Additional Information:

What this petition is specifically asking for is:

- A Scoping and Feasibility study for the Bangor to Afon-wen Line
- Commitment to spend any funding for the railways from Westminster on reinstating the railway lines
- Develop a blueprint of the rail route between Bangor and Cardiff on the proposed route
- Look at other routes within Wales that would be beneficial on a national and local level to reopen

If we are looking to develop the infrastructure in Wales, and to use a greener method of travel, reinstating and reopening this railway would be a step in the right direction, and would be beneficial for all the communities situated along the railway, as well as for Wales as a nation.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales

Agenda Item 3.4

P-06-1389 Introduce a 30mph limit on the trunk road through the villages of Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais

This petition was submitted by Catherine Ruth Stevenson, having collected a total of 419 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Many residential areas in Wales now benefit from a 20mph speed limit, with a strong evidence based rationale from Welsh Government. We do not feel it is safe that our villages of Eglwys Fach & Ffwrnais still suffer a 40mph limit. For over 30 years we have been campaigning for safer pedestrian access in these villages, with 2 fatalities during that time. We want Welsh Government to review the 40mph limits through the villages to enable residents to walk safely and improve well being.

Additional Information:

The villages sit along the main A487. The majority of the road has no pavement so our residents, including children and young people catching school buses, residents visiting neighbours or attending events, older villagers catching the bus, all have to walk ON the main A487. In some places there is insufficient room for 2 cars to pass on the road so motorists have to slow down to a halt to avoid these walkers.

The rationale of the Welsh Government for the 20mph limits through residential areas is: "The evidence from around the world is very clear – decreasing speeds will reduce collisions, save lives and reduce injuries – helping to improve quality of life and make our streets and local communities safer for all."

Given the evidence we feel strongly that the speed limit through the villages of Eglwys Fach & Ffwrnais should be reviewed and reduced from 40mph.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- 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-06-1389
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/00795/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

27 June 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for letter of 15 May regarding Petition P-06-1389 Introduce a 30mph limit on the trunk road through the villages of Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais. I apologise for the delay in replying.

My officials have provided comments on the draft report and a final version is expected to be received within the next two months. The communities will then be consulted on options to be progressed for design.

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:
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Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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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.

P-06-1389 - Introduce a 30mph limit on the trunk road through the villages of Eglwys Fach and Ffwrnais – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 27 June 2025

Dear Kayleigh

Thanks for the below. We look forward to consultation of the final report.

We are currently asking for a reduction from 40mph to 30 mph, however we also note that we would also meet the requirements for 20mph, having a Community hall within 100m of the road. We don't want to complicate our petition but would expect that 30mph would be the very least reduction that is required.

All the best

Ruth

Agenda Item 3.5

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

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

Text of Petition:

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

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

Additional Information:

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

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

16 May 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Committee response to correspondence regarding petitions

Thank you for your letters regarding the petition calling for a long-term future for Lampeter Campus (P-06-1507), the petition regarding dog grooming (P-06-1391) and the two petitions regarding greyhound racing (P-06-1253 and P-06-1354). The Committee considered these letters and the petitions at our meeting on 30 April.

The Committee has a busy forward work programme, so we have no plans to undertake specific inquiries on these issues at this point. However, we are keeping a watching brief with regards to the situation in the Welsh Higher Education Sector where it relates to our remit around the economy and research and development. We are also keeping a watching brief on the Welsh Government's animal welfare work, and we will include dog grooming in this.

Regarding greyhound racing, I note the Welsh Government has stated an intention to bring forward legislation to ban greyhound racing in Wales. It is for the Business Committee to decide which bills are scrutinised by which Committee. However, if a bill to legislate on that commitment is referred to this Committee, I will ensure we reflect on the views expressed and information provided by both petitions as part of our scrutiny.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew RT Davies

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



P-06-1391 Introduce regulation of the dog grooming sector, to protect the welfare of dogs and rights of owners - Petitioner to Committee, 08 July 2025

Dear Committee

Thank you for your continued work. The inclusion of Pet Grooming into the Animal Welfare Consultation response is a wonderful result. Wales now has shown an exemplary commitment to animal welfare and raising standards.

It would very helpful to understand a proposed time line for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of implementation.

Also, would it possible to arrange a meeting to discuss some of the topics this statement has now highlighted?

Kindest regards

Brian Howell

Agenda Item 3.6

P-06-1476 1000 meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries

This petition was submitted by Monika Golebiewska, having collected 1,585 signatures online and 9,888 signatures on paper, making for a total of 11,473 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Ensure mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries in Wales. We propose at least 1,000.00 meters buffer zone from all residential areas, schools, hospitals, and care facilities. Currently the law allows for quarries to be located as close as 200 meters away from residential areas and schools. This is affecting people's health and causing damage to property. The bigger buffer zone we can have the better.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central

**P-06-1476 1000 meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries
- Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 20 June 2025**

Good evening

I was hoping that the petition would be a push for change and it's such a disappointment that the quarry is still operating.

It makes me wonder what needs to happen for those in power to understand how serious this is.

I very much doubt that they would be happy if there was a quarry by their house, so why allow it in Glyncoch "deprived area".

I hope the further debate will lead to some changes!

The community's best interest requires the quarry to be shut down as mental and physical wellbeing is being affected. There is damage to houses and destruction of wildlife.

Many thanks

Monika Golebiewska

Additional comments from a Glyncoch Community resident

Dear Petitions Committee

I am very disappointed with the outcome of the debate.

You are admitting that there are issues with quarrying and you are not shutting Craig Y Hesk Quarry down. Or ensuring that they are meeting the planning conditions in which was set out by Planning. RCT should never be able to sell the land for further quarrying.

The Glyncoch Community are advising you that this is another Aberfan disaster waiting to happen.

Heidelberg Materials UK are destroying the mental health of the community. Children literally feel as though their school is going to fall down when the quarry blasts. It is meant to be a place where they should feel safe.

You should be ashamed of yourselves for allowing Craig Y Hesk Quarry to continue to operate.

The community cannot be any clearer in advising you if the daily issues we are facing.

You are allowing a quarry to consider their profits over the whole community.

Someone somewhere should be accountable for their actions of allowing Craig Y Hesg Quarry to operate.

Please take action before the whole of the area is destroyed and lives are lost.

It is a known fact that silica dust causes Asthma COPD and many other respiratory conditions.

Regards

Annemarie Coggins living in the Glyncoch Community

Agenda Item 3.7

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

This petition was submitted by Zena Blackwell having collected 3,369 signatures.

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.

Additional information:

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.

The Committee held a round table event on the issue and carried out engagement work in schools. A [report](#) was published on 12 March 2025 with recommendations for the Welsh Government.

Senedd Constituency and Region:

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

P-06-1482 Ban smartphones in all schools in Wales with exemptions for exceptional circumstances Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07 July 2025

To whom it may concern;

I want to begin by thanking the Petitions Committee for considering this petition and bringing it forward for debate.

However, I feel compelled to address a key misunderstanding. At no point did my petition call for a ban on smartphones during the journey to or from school. The focus has always been on *use within schools*. So I was concerned to hear the Chair of the Committee, Carolyn Thomas, refer—both in the Siambr and previously on ITV News—to children needing phones for reassurance or for bus passes. While those points may have merit, they do not relate to the actual content of the petition. I believe this misses a critical distinction, and I was disappointed to see that misunderstanding repeated in such public forums.

I also want to express concern about the reluctance to use the word *ban*. If we recognise that something is harmful to children in a school environment, then we must be willing to say so directly. Using softer language like “discourage” or “manage” avoids the issue. Clarity is important—especially when children's wellbeing is at stake.

Finally, I want to reiterate that I do not believe individual headteachers are best placed to make decisions on smartphone policy alone. A consistent national approach is essential. Just recently, my daughter's prospective secondary school—Cardiff High—sent staff to her primary school as part of the transition process. Those teachers proudly told the pupils that students “love it” because they're allowed to use their phones at lunch and break. I was genuinely outraged. That message promotes antisocial behaviour at precisely the time when young people should be encouraged to interact, move around, and take a break from screens. I believe the school—and those staff—should feel ashamed of themselves for endorsing that kind of culture.

Finally, I don't believe I have anything else to add that I haven't already said in my petition and my previous response to the Committee. I simply ask Members to reflect on what kind of school environment we are encouraging, and whether it truly puts children's wellbeing first.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Zena

Dear Petitions Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for a national ban on smartphone use in schools during the school day, aside from exceptional circumstances ('smartphone-free school'). As a parent of two young children, I read with interest the recent Petitions Committee report (CR-LD17055-E) and followed the plenary debate on 12 June 2024 with close attention.

While I commend the attention the Senedd has given to this issue, I am concerned that the case against a ban, as presented in the debate and the report, rests on arguments that do not sufficiently withstand close scrutiny - particularly when weighed against the growing evidence base in support of such a ban.

The following factors should be considered:

- **Mischaracterisation of the evidence base:** The report and some Members described the evidence as "limited", overlooking robust international findings that show measurable academic, wellbeing and behavioural benefits following bans. Large-scale studies from the LSE, UNESCO, and Policy Exchange were cited in the debate but not addressed directly or more closely examined.

- **Overreliance on autonomy and inclusion arguments:** While school-level discretion has value, a patchwork approach creates inconsistency and confusion for families. The suggestion that a ban would exclude vulnerable pupils ignores existing practices where medical and safeguarding exemptions are managed effectively in schools with lock-away policies.

- **Inverted workload logic:** The claim that a ban would increase staff burden is undermined by direct evidence from educators, who report that universal bans actually simplify enforcement and reduce daily conflict with pupils.

- **False equivalence with digital inclusion:** Owning a smartphone is not the same as needing it during class. Arguments referencing digital skills fail to recognise that these can be taught safely through managed devices like tablets or laptops, without the risk of distraction or inappropriate content. The debate also referenced the intention to support digital inclusion by ensuring children are familiar with smartphone functions by the time they leave school and enter the workforce. However, this rationale is flawed. As acknowledged during the debate, the vast majority of children already have access to smartphones outside of school hours. Familiarity with smartphone functions is therefore

not in question. What is needed during the school day is not more exposure, but structured boundaries that prioritise focus, wellbeing, and safe digital habits - none of which are compromised by restricting smartphone use during school lessons.

The debate did not fully engage with a number of crucial pro-ban arguments also:

- Studies consistently show improved attainment - especially for disadvantaged pupils - after smartphones are removed from the classroom.
- Mental health trends among young people have worsened in parallel with smartphone uptake. It is no longer credible to separate school use from this trend, given the addictive nature of the technology.
- Banning smartphones in schools creates time and space to explicitly teach digital resilience and safe online behaviour, rather than simply hoping that guidance will suffice.

I would urge the Senedd to more critically evaluate the evidence and to consider a national baseline policy: a ban on smartphones during the school day, with clearly defined exemptions and funding for implementation (e.g., lockable pouches or lockers), and not tie their own hands through citing the digital inclusion policy. The state of our children's future mental health is at risk, and I strongly believe that a ban would protect children's wellbeing, improve educational outcomes, and support teachers in creating a safe and focused learning environment.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Hargreaves

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Zena Blackwell

—
**Economy, Trade, and
Rural Affairs Committee**

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Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

2 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Petition P-06-1488: Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long Covid Crisis in Wales

Thank you for your letter regarding Petition P-06-1488: Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long Covid Crisis in Wales. The Committee currently has a full work programme, so unfortunately we will not be able to hold an inquiry into long covid and the associated impact on workers and the economy.

However, I agree this is an issue that should be looked at. I have written to the Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning raising the issues relevant to our Committee in the petition. I have copied you into the letter.

Yours Sincerely,



Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



Rebecca Evans MS

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning

2 July 2025

Dear Rebecca,

Petition P-06-1488: Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long Covid Crisis in Wales

I am writing following a letter we received from the Petitions Committee regarding [Petition P-06-1488 Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long COVID Crisis in Wales](#). The petition urges action on long covid and specifically, with relation to our remit, calls for support for those with long covid. Namely it calls for:

- "Workplace adjustments such as flexible hours, remote work, and discrimination protections"; and
- "A Universal Basic Income pilot, examining how financial support could empower people to contribute to society, regardless of health status."

Please can you set out what the Welsh Government is doing to support people with long covid to play their role in the Welsh economy and access work?

I have copied this letter to Carolyn Thomas MS, chair of the Petitions Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew RT Davies

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

CC: Carolyn Thomas MS, Chair, Petitions Committee



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