

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 (Senedd)

Meeting date: 28 April 2025

Meeting time: 11:30

For further information contact:

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Pre-meeting

(11:00–11:30)

Public meeting

(11:30–15:15)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(11:30)

2 Social cohesion: evidence session five

(11:30–12:30)

(Pages 1 – 20)

Joe Rossiter, Co-Director, Institute of Welsh Affairs

Dr. Anwen Elias, Reader in politics, Department of International Politics,
Aberystwyth University

Professor Matt Ryan, Southampton University

BREAK

(12:30 – 13:30)

3 Social cohesion: evidence session six

(13:30–14:15)

Misbah Malik, Senior Policy and Engagement Officer, Hope Not Hate

BREAK

(14:15–14:30)



- 4 Social cohesion: evidence session seven**
(14:30–15:15) (Pages 21 – 49)
Cllr MaryAnn Brockelsby, Leader of Monmouthshire Council and WLGA Social Justice Spokesperson
- 5 Papers to note**
(15:15)
- 5.1 Correspondence to the Chair from Professor Rod Hicks regarding Child Poverty**
(Pages 50 – 55)
- 5.2 Correspondence to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip from Pippa Cotterill of the Royal College Speech and Language Therapists Wales**
(Pages 56 – 57)
- 5.3 Correspondence to the Chair from the Petitions Committee regarding residents affected by the Arbed and CESP schemes**
(Pages 58 – 59)
- 5.4 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill LCM**
(Pages 60 – 64)
- 5.5 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Legislation, Justice and the Constitution Committee regarding the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill LCM**
(Page 65)
- 5.6 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Legislation, Justice and the Constitution Committee regarding Inter–Institutional Relations Agreement: Forthcoming Governmental Meetings**
(Pages 66 – 67)

5.7 Correspondence from the Northern Irish Committee to the Chair regarding proposed UK Welfare Reforms

(Pages 68 – 69)

5.8 Correspondence from Disability Wales to the Chair regarding UK Government welfare reforms

(Pages 70 – 71)

5.9 Correspondence from the Chair of the Senedd Cross Party Group on Disability regarding the UK Government's welfare reforms

(Pages 72 – 73)

6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) a (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting

(15:15)

Private meeting

(15:15–16:00)

7 Social cohesion: consideration of evidence

(15:15–15:30)

8 Forward work programme

(15:30–15:45)

(Pages 74 – 79)

9 Legislative Consent Measure: Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill – consideration of draft report

(15:45–16:00)

(Pages 80 – 90)

10 Welfare reform

(16:00–16:10)

(Pages 91 – 101)

Document is Restricted

Equality and Social Justice Committee Inquiry Social Cohesion

Introduction to the WLGA

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is a politically led cross-party organisation that seeks to give local government a strong voice at a national level. We represent the interests of local government and promote local democracy in Wales.

The 22 councils in Wales are our members and the three fire and rescue authorities and three national park authorities are associate members.

We believe that the ideas that change people's lives, happen locally.

Communities are at their best when they feel connected to their council through local democracy. By championing, facilitating, and achieving these connections, we can build a vibrant local democracy that allows communities to thrive.

Our ultimate goal is to promote, protect, support and develop democratic local government and the interests of councils in Wales.

We'll achieve our vision by

- Promoting the role and prominence of councillors and council leaders
- Ensuring maximum local discretion in legislation or statutory guidance
- Championing and securing long-term and sustainable funding for councils
- Promoting sector-led improvement
- Encouraging a vibrant local democracy, promoting greater diversity
- Supporting councils to effectively manage their workforce.

As the Employers organisation for local government in Wales, the WLGA also works to ensure the vital contribution made by local government employees to improving the social and economic health of their communities is protected, and to maintain positive industrial relations within our workforce.



Social Cohesion

Background

- The WLGA welcomes the Committee's decision to hold an inquiry into Social Cohesion. Local government is uniquely positioned as the tier of democracy that is closest to the citizens of Wales, and the extent to which social cohesion sits the heart of local policymaking, service delivery and local democracy cannot be exaggerated.
- The WLGA recognises that, as noted in the background to the Committee's inquiry, Wales faced significant and damaging social unrest in 2021 and 2023 at Mayhill, Swansea and Ely, Cardiff. A lack of social cohesion underpinned those events, linked to familiar public policy challenges around poverty, social exclusion and distrust between citizens and public bodies.
- As noted by the Committee, the wider context around social cohesion includes the 2024 rioting in England (and Northern Ireland), driven by anti-immigration sentiment and a combination of deep-seated tensions and online misinformation. Hate crime incidents, inspired or encouraged by the rioting in England, did occur in Wales.
- Wales also witnessed far-right political mobilisation in 2023 around the Home Office decision to utilise the Stradey Park Hotel, Llanelli, to house asylum seekers. Opposition to the plan, due to the location and broad use of the hotel as a community resource, also included mainstream political parties, a wide range of community members, and the local authority. But the local situation which developed following the announcement of use of the hotel to accommodate asylum seekers, which included a number of public disorder offences, arose as a result of the lack of communication, information and engagement with local communities, contributing to a lack of social cohesion and an increase in tensions.
- In all of the cases referenced above, Welsh councils were heavily impacted by unrest but were also at the forefront of rebuilding community trust, cohesion and safety. Evidence which will be presented in this submission demonstrates that Welsh councils play both a **leadership response** role in the multi-agency approach to tackling the outcomes of poor social cohesion, and a **preventative role** in maintaining community and social cohesion by instilling pride, unity and positive community relations in localities.
- *A Wales of cohesive communities* is one of the seven goals referenced by the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and more generally remains a core purpose of local government, being embedded naturally in the concept of ward-based Councillor representation, community leadership and the provision of core local services to our communities.



- Our evidence reflects lessons from Welsh councils in maintaining social cohesion positively, and in responding and leading the multi-agency approach to resolving the different types of unrest that have manifested as a result of societal challenges in Wales.
- The WLGA hosts the Wales Safer Communities Network (WSCN) and the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP), contributing to local government expertise and co-ordination in relevant areas, that is, working closely with Community Safety Partnerships and asylum, resettlement and migration lead officers. Their evidence should be considered in conjunction with this WLGA corporate submission.
- Our evidence focusses mainly on the first two Terms of Reference set by the Committee for the inquiry.

Committee ToR 1

The Committee will explore...the key issues which impact social cohesion in Wales and consider whether interventions need to target specific groups of people, geographical areas or particular key issues.

- Social cohesion presents a unique challenge to Welsh councils. The underlying data suggest a country where the clear majority of people feel that people of different backgrounds get on well together, treat each other with respect, and feel that they belong to their local area¹. Community life across Wales in all of its diversity usually proceeds peacefully and respectfully, from the experience of Welsh councils. But the uniqueness of the social cohesion challenge is that on those occasions where social cohesion breaks down, it can do so dramatically and damagingly in the form of unrest and rioting.
- Hate crime related threats to social cohesion are ever-present and are linked to Welsh, UK and global political developments around immigration, refugees, race, conflicts and extremism. Those factors did not result in any Welsh occurrences of the recent riots, but have led to extremist incidents including at protests, which did at times turn violent, and also in the form of hate crime. Councils were alert to the possibility of riots in Wales during the English disorder in 2024, co-operated with the police to monitor conditions locally and engaged with local communities, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and asylum seekers and refugees.
- Good social cohesion can help prevent and reduce the impact of incidents in the hate crime and extremism 'space', although due to the individualised nature of incidents and perpetrators it can be difficult to assess the success of social cohesion policies. Online radicalisation across extreme political and religious ideologies affects individuals, who may not participate in community life. But Councils clearly understand from their daily role in Welsh

¹ [Wellbeing of Wales, 2024: a Wales of cohesive communities \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)



communities that resilient, strong and safe communities can prevent wider support from being mobilised around extremist narratives or behaviours.

Social Unrest- Mayhill and Ely

- Large-scale social unrest occurred at Mayhill, Swansea in 2021 and at Ely, Cardiff in 2023. The community tensions involved were not related to race, immigration or linked narratives which currently and rightly are receiving serious attention (including elsewhere in this evidence), but were related to a breakdown of trust between some residents and the authorities (in the widest sense). It is important that the role of youth exclusion, frustration and anger, poverty, and lack of opportunities is fully understood as a contributory factor to undermining social cohesion. The two cases cited have different explanations and factors, although in both cases improving community cohesion is part of the solution.
- The Mayhill riot in May 2021 led to eighteen people being imprisoned, seven police officers being injured, substantial damage to the property of Mayhill residents, and a climate of fear and violence erupting following a vigil. Swansea Council, South Wales Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner undertook an independent joint review of the events, concluding that underpinning factors included “the effects of Covid lockdowns, social media narratives, criminal behaviours, socio-economic dynamics, and reactions to the tragic death of Ethan Powell”².
- A summary of the Independent Learning Review reflected on the need for community development and investment without creating a causal link to the incident, stating “Highlighting the need to improve the physical environment and invest in the development of the community arises clearly from the learning review, but this need have no causal link to the incident”³. This statement means that there is a risk that disorder can be driven by criminality directly. Community engagement and development is best seen as a way of improving underlying cohesion and as part of recovery following incidents of unrest.
- The Ely riot in May 2023 likewise resulted in dozens of arrests, injuries to police officers and some damage to property. In this specific case the factor of distrust in police from some local residents emerged following the tragic deaths of Kyrees Sullivan and Harvey Evans. Those events are subject to an IOPC investigation and the WLGA will not comment here on policing related matters while that continues.
- However, Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government recognised immediately that the Ely and Caerau communities required greater engagement and targeted resources via a Community Action Plan, which was published in 2024⁴. The Action Plan draws upon the area’s positive attributes and is

² [Mayhill disturbance Independent Learning Review | South Wales Police](#)

³ [Mayhill disturbance Independent Learning Review | South Wales Police](#)

⁴ [Community Plan for Ely and Caerau 2024](#)



shaped by local residents, with the Council the key enabling and delivery body.

Social Cohesion, Hate Crime and Extremism

- As is clear from the Committee's understanding, the wider climate around the negative discourse on immigration and direct attacks on accommodation for asylum seekers during the 2024 rioting represents a generational challenge to integration and social cohesion in Wales and other western democracies.
- Key issues in this 'space' also include refugee resettlement. It is worth clarifying that a series of successful refugee and migrant resettlement projects have either been completed or are already underway in Wales, for example, for Syrians, Afghans and Ukrainians, where existing communities have welcomed new arrivals and supported the integration process. The WLGA helps co-ordinate the role of Welsh Councils in those programmes, including through the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership.
- But the events around Stradey Park, Llanelli, demonstrate how far-right political mobilisation took place following a Home Office decision to close the business and utilise it to accommodate asylum seekers while their claims were to be determined. Crucially, the decision was not only contested by extremists but was against the wishes of the Council and many members of the local community. Social cohesion was cited by the Council as being at risk due to the unsuitable scale and nature of the site. Without revisiting the whole series of events, the lack of engagement between the Home Office and the Council – despite the best efforts of the local authority – resulted in an unsuitable site being considered for use. This created a platform for ill-feeling, extremist protest (and counter-demonstrations) and some arrests around aspects of that protest. Investigative reporting by the BBC suggests that the events provided a platform for radicalisation of individuals and their movement into Llanelli in order to protest⁵.
- Responding to Stradey Park related matters cost Carmarthenshire Council (and Dyfed Powys Police) a significant amount of working hours, and the authority has since worked to rebuild trust between the local community, the Council and government more generally. Earlier and proactive engagement from the UK Government around the siting of asylum hotels, recognising the leadership role of Welsh Councils and their local valuable knowledge of site and community suitability, is essential as resettlement projects continued to be planned across Wales. The mantra that 'Councils know best' about conditions in their local areas should be recognised, so that social cohesion can be maintained by integrating new residents into the community via schooling, access to services and amenities.
- The final decision to not proceed with use of the hotel, due to safety concerns of people placed on the site, while ultimately the right decision, means that significant community tensions have been created unnecessarily and could

⁵ [BBC investigation exposes 'far-right' group in secret filming - BBC News](#)



potentially have been avoided should earlier engagement and discussion with the council occurred.

Targeted Interventions

- In terms of the Committee's interest in interventions to 'target specific groups of people, geographical areas or particular key issues', Welsh Councils would appreciate an emphasis on:
- Resourcing preventative local authority led approaches that can be targeted at specific local communities, based on local intelligence.
- Continued, proactive and responsive national leadership on integration, counter-extremism and cohesion.
- An awareness that continued reduction in non-statutory local government services will disproportionately impact the socio-economic groups where Welsh social disorder has most recently occurred: these services include leisure, play, youth services and the appearance of open spaces and the built environment.
- Respect-based recognition and more positive narratives from the UK Government Home Office on the specific matter of refugee resettlement schemes, accepting that examples of good practice exist as well as high-profile failings.
- For all public bodies, including Welsh Councils, to listen to and be guided by local residents in their decision-making, seeking to empower them and promote social inclusion.

Committee ToR 2

Examples of best practice and other interventions/needed to support social cohesion and overcome tensions. This includes understanding the role the third sector plays in supporting social cohesion and what barriers it faces, including funding.

Local Authority Leadership and Preventative Approaches

- Welsh Councils perform a **leadership response**/role to instances of local disorder, often being physically first responders as Councillors and officers, in a direct police liaison role, and in leading post-disorder clear-up and repair activities around housing, highways and maintenance and the environment. Along with the Police, Councils are the public bodies with the greatest stake in community safety. Swansea Council was cited by the Welsh Government for



its role in providing emergency support to local residents, and for leading on community recover⁶.

- Following both the Mayhill and Ely disorder, the respective Councils mobilised community development packages, securing additional government funding for targeted local interventions. This has included the delivery of new sports pitches, housing improvements, enhancements to the local environment, and increased access to employment support. In both cities the investment packages included the directly affected community and the neighbouring area, recognising the interconnected urban nature of those cases. Those investments mitigate some of the impacts of spending cuts to other services and help promote social cohesion and pride in the local area.
- Welsh Councils also undertake a **preventative role** in maintaining community and social cohesion, as part of multi-agency working alongside the police and the third sector. Because much of Welsh life takes place in cohesive and peaceful communities, social cohesion is often hidden in plain view as a daily reality. But Welsh Councils generally believe that access to community amenities, prevention of visible business and built environment decline, enabling regeneration, and support services such as youth work and education play important roles in promoting social cohesion and increasing community resilience. These services, often non-statutory, are usually provided by local government but Welsh Councils can also play a co-ordinating role in mobilising funding streams for the third sector, working with business and higher education.
- The Safer Communities Network states that “Cohesive communities that are well connected are more resilient to change, and people are kinder to each other. It leads to individuals and communities being trusted and empowered to do the things that matter, and they have good access to public bodies involved in Health, Education, Housing and Community Safety. Community cohesion describes the ability of all communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict”⁷.

Supporting Social Cohesion and Overcoming Tensions

- The need to overcome tensions is directly relevant to social cohesion in light of the climate around migration, refugee resettlement and hate crime. The WLGA is committed to working with the Welsh Government to implement its Nation of Sanctuary related commitments.⁸
- Welsh Councils worked with the Welsh Government on its *Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan (2016-17)*. The plan ensured continued funding for eight Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinations covering Wales and hosted by local government. Those co-ordinators had been in place since the Delivery Plan’s 2013 predecessor strategy *Getting On*

⁶ [Written Statement: Mayhill incident \(25 May 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#)

⁷ [Community Tensions & Community Cohesion - Wales Safer Communities](#)

⁸ [Councils at the heart of Wales’ nation of sanctuary - WLGA](#)



Together. The plan identified seven areas where outcomes would be improved namely hate crime, modern slavery, inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers, immigration, tackling poverty, mainstreaming cohesion and tension monitoring. Several Senedd Committees have recommended that this work should be updated and if the Welsh Government decides to do so, it is essential that the WLGA and Welsh Councils are involved at the earliest stage.

- The creation of the 2016-17 Delivery Plan, building on the 2013 *Getting On Together* community cohesion strategy, encouraged Welsh Councils to create local community cohesion plans and mainstreamed the concept with Councillors and officers. Funding attached to both strategies (approx. £500k per year) ensured that the Regional Co-Ordinators could designate officers to lead on specific cohesion challenges including issues facing the Gypsy and Traveller Communities, people with Protected Characteristics and victims of hate crime.
- The Regional Cohesion teams are currently in place, and in north-east Wales played a vital role in engaging with minoritised communities during the Covid-19 pandemic⁹.
- All 22 local authorities have a community cohesion team or service either working at the regional level or locally, depending on the decision of the local authority about where resources and capacity are best deployed. Activities undertaken across our Councils include connecting diverse communities to services, monitoring cohesion and community tensions, and liaison with police over those tensions and other issues.
- Rural social cohesion is a vital area of focus for Welsh Councils, and currently tends to be approached through a community vitality and affordable housing perspective. Measures to address what some of our member councils have described as the *second homes crisis*, utilising planning and taxation policy tools provided by the Welsh Government, seek to address cohesion on a socio-economic basis. On asylum seeker accommodation, Carmarthenshire Council has said that the “dispersal model of accommodation has worked well”¹⁰, leading to successful placements of people into local communities.
- Local authority community cohesion activity has mostly focussed on diverse communities and the refugee and migration policy area. Social cohesion is a wider picture not solely framed by race, and the socio-economic aspects of social cohesion are often targeted by a community development approach.

Committee ToR 3

⁹ [Regional Community Cohesion Service for North East Wales \(Wrexham CBC, Denbighshire CC and Flintshire CC\) - WLGA](#)

¹⁰ [Concerns raised over Home Office plans to house 300 asylum seekers at west Wales hotel | cambrian-news.co.uk](#)



What support the Welsh Government provides to community groups and organisations and identify whether there are any opportunities to provide additional support.

- The Welsh Government provides a significant amount of financial support to the third sector in order to enable activities which contribute to social cohesion. Welsh Councils always encourage local third sector groups to access as many diverse funding streams as possible. The WLGA believes that community groups and organisations are the bedrock of enabling social cohesion efforts, and it is no exaggeration to say that Welsh Councils work with these groups on a daily basis across the nation.
- We would argue that Welsh Councils are the best placed public bodies to distribute resources and support to community groups across the third sector, ensuring these services and support work in tandem with councils and other public bodies and facilitating good engagement and communication across many community groups, including those marginalised from society. This can be done regionally or locally.
- Opportunities to provide additional support should be pursued under a national strategic framework, co-designed with local government and the third sector and with delivery on the ground led by Welsh Councils, with any additional functions funded from **outside of the local government finance settlement** with additional funds.
- The Welsh Government, local government and the third sector should collaborate to set the objectives of such a refreshed national strategy, updated to reflect the latest challenges to social cohesion seen in Wales in 2021-2024. Once those objectives have been set councils should be free to approach their communities to identify specific local priorities.
- Relying on declining (in real-terms once accounting for spending pressures) council budgets to deliver the ingredients for social cohesion will risk creating conditions which help foster disorder, disenchantment and social exclusion.

The Committee is calling for written evidence. Further information can be found on the [consultation webpage](#). The closing date is 14 February 2025.

In line with the Terms of Reference the Committee will explore:

The key issues which impact social cohesion in Wales and consider whether interventions need to target specific groups of people, geographical areas or particular key issues.

The [Wales Strategic Migration Partnership](#)/WSMP works across Wales and the UK with a wide range of partners on the delivery of UK Government humanitarian and visa schemes. Currently priority schemes include asylum dispersal, refugee resettlement, the Hong Kong BN(O) Visa Scheme, National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Ukraine, and ESOL.

Key issues impacting community cohesion (migration-related)

Narratives

- There are increasing issues around mis/disinformation and **Freedom-Restricting Harassment** (see Hong Kong* below and end note).
- The national political and media narrative about migration can negatively increase tensions and impact community cohesion.
- Wider international and political and **geo-political issues** also impact negatively, including online narratives. These issues have local impacts and contribute to an environment of hostility and intolerance.
- The online space played a significant part in the tensions and riots that followed the Southport murders. Many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities reported feeling unsafe during this time and highlighted a lack of communication from leaders in civil society in Wales.

Asylum dispersal

- **The UK has operated a successful model of community-based asylum dispersal since circa 2001**, led by councils and the private sector, with funding for integration and tailored support provided by local authority (LA) teams working with third sector partners. In recent years, the model has changed to a private sector led model and LAs have had less control or oversight of delivery.
- The UKG policy of full dispersal introduced in 2023 means that all UK local authorities are now mandated to receive asylum seekers, who are now accommodated in 20 LAs in Wales. Where asylum seekers are accommodated in more rural areas, there is less availability of specialist services and support, but it is a mixed picture: there are many success stories where councils have worked well with the private provider to welcome and integrate asylum seekers into local communities and connect them to key services.
- However, while good progress has been made, the aim to achieve equitable dispersal and reduce pressures on major towns and cities has not yet been

fully achieved and the Home Office has had to rely on **hotels or other contingency sites** as demand for accommodation outstrips supply. In many areas, the use of hotels has now become the focus of community tensions.

- The lack of equity of dispersal means that in some places there continue to be **concentrations of asylum seekers** in areas with the cheapest housing/social deprivation, meaning there may be heightened cohesion risks.
- It is recognised that LAs have a degree of oversight and control over accommodation procurement requests and where they raise cohesion concerns, often the private sector accommodation provider has not proceeded with procurement. However, there have been occasions where LAs have not been listened to when feeding back **reasonable and evidence-based concerns** about the potential for cohesion issues in relation to the procurement of asylum accommodation.
- There is no provision for **community engagement** in the asylum accommodation contracts, and the lack of engagement has contributed to tensions and disinformation around asylum hotels.
- **Access to services and support for asylum seekers and migrants who are destitute/have no recourse to public (NRPF) funds is patchy**, and many migrants live for months if not years in limbo, unable to regularise their immigration status (in part due to lack of access to legal advice). They may be vulnerable to exploitation and living in communities already impacted by cost-of-living crisis and poor community cohesion. (Local authorities are working together to develop internal responses to people with NRFP and Welsh Government have offered funding to LAs to use NRPF Connect data system).

Role of Local Authorities

The [Sarah Khan Review](#) states that *'many of the cohesion risks I identify are chronic, insidious and often sit below the radar; the impact of which is not actively measured or even fully appreciated.'* While the Khan review applies to England, many of the report findings and recommendations *may* be applicable in Wales. The Khan review concluded:

- *Local authorities were struggling to manage evolving threats to community cohesion amid a lack of resources, expertise and capability.*
- *On the front line, local authorities are struggling to prevent, manage and contain the impact of conspiracy theories, disinformation and extremist activity, which is undermining social cohesion and, in some cases, causing democratic disruption.*
- *Many local authorities lack the capability, expertise and resources necessary to deal with evolving cohesion threats. Not enough consideration has been given in supporting and improving the capability of local authorities and practitioners to respond effectively.*
- *Local authorities lack accountability in improving and protecting social cohesion. Even under existing statutory duties for example the Public Sector*

Equality Duty (s.149 of Equality Act 2010), public bodies are required to ‘foster good relations’ between differing groups of people. Yet this is not being adequately implemented by local authorities or assessed adequately by the Equality Human Rights Commission. There also continues to be a ‘culture of fear’ among some local authorities, where they are not prepared to have the necessary and difficult conversations. (Khan, p.20)

- The WG funded Community Cohesion Coordinators play a vital role in supporting LAs, who face significant and evolving challenges in responding to cohesion risks. However, given the findings of the Khan Review, **more work is needed to understand the extent to which Welsh local authorities are equipped to identify and manage community cohesion issues in the current context**, and what they would like to see in place to better support their role. Given LAs’ duty to promote good relations, it is key to obtain an in depth understanding of the current cohesion risks and responses, and the framework and tools they have to manage cohesion issues. This is particularly important in view of the capacity and resource limitations LAs are facing.

Examples of best practice and other interventions/needed to support social cohesion and overcome tensions.

Best practice

- **Policial leadership from Welsh Government** related to Wales as a nation of Sanctuary.
- Ongoing Welsh Government funding of **Community Cohesion Coordinators** operating across Wales, who played a vital role sharing intelligence with partners during the protests at Stradey Park.
- **Welsh Government mis/disinformation toolkit** (currently in draft form).
- The UK wide, local government led **‘Tackling asylum refugee and migrant hate crime and harassment’** forum. This is attended by up to 100 members from across the UK. Councils are able to share intelligence about asylum hotels, cohesion and hate crime, and share best practice.
- **The WSMP chairs and enables multi-agency work across Wales**, in which Issues around cohesion and community tensions are identified and risks escalated, feeding into relevant national Wales and UK structures.
- The WSMP and partners have shared lessons learned in relation to the operation of hotels/contingency sites in Penally and more recently, in Llanelli, in collaboration with Home Office, Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association, Dyfed Powys Police, Carmarthenshire County Council, Hope not Hate, Croeso Llanelli, Furnace Action Committee and local residents.
- The lessons learned and recommendations for improvement focus on six key areas: identification and procurement of contingency sites; engagement and communications; partnership working and information sharing; policing; impacts and recovery.

- Furthermore, a **'Healing the Divide' conference** took place in Llanelli in November 2024, with the aim to gather views on the causes of division in Llanelli, enable community leaders to understand the impact of the divisions and explore ways in which the community can work together to tackle hate. **Subsequently a report on the conference has been shared**, outlining a call to action for Welsh Government, Home Office, Carmarthenshire County Council and other partners. The key recommendations focus on formation of a Llanelli community cohesion partnership, recovery plan, communication and counter narratives.
- During the violent protests of last summer, the WSMP **developed two hate crime information leaflets**, one for agencies working with affected communities and one on safety and support for those that could be victims of hate crime. The resources contained a set of useful links and websites explaining what hate crime is, how to report it and where individuals that experienced it might seek support. The leaflet on safety and support for individuals has been translated into ten languages and widely shared.
- The WSMP facilitates an online [Hong Kong Welcome Hub](#) and funds a range of projects, including a drop in centre in Cardiff which provides social activities, advice and information for Hong Kongers. **This is a vital resource to enable Hong Kongers to meet and interact with service providers and local community groups.**
- **A 'Town Hall' meeting** was held in the Vale of Glamorgan last year, with the aim to update the general public on intention to use the St Athan site for Afghan arrivals prior to finding permanent homes. The MoD had already communicated extensively, on national and local media, but wanted an opportunity to meet the local community. The Town Hall format was used as a way of **preventing the spread of misinformation** and to reassure the local community. The MoD encouraged attendees to become their "ambassadors", sharing accurate information to clarify facts and avoid misinformation. It was attended by around 70 members of the public plus a range of officials the MoD, Police, LA, local Health Board, and the WSMP, and was successful in terms of community 'buy in' and understanding of the situation and plight of Afghans. This town hall and associated media strategy could provide a **model for similar community engagement work** related to asylum and resettlement.

Interventions needed to support social cohesion and overcome tensions

Communications

- **The Khan Review highlighted that Local authorities need to improve their ability to respond to conspiracy theories, disinformation and incidents of high tension and conflict.** The Welsh Government mis/disinformation toolkit addresses some of the issues and solutions the Khan Review identifies. The toolkit is a welcome development, but further support and engagement is required to enable media and comms strategies to embed key messages and ways of working into their public communications.

See also ‘interventions,’ below.

Understanding the role the third sector plays in supporting social cohesion and what barriers it faces, including funding.

What support the Welsh Government provides to community groups and organisations and identify whether there are any opportunities to provide additional support. This includes examining the limitations and barriers which exist given some aspects of support for social cohesion are reserved to the UK Government (for example policing, media and internet regulation), and what action could be taken to overcome these challenges.

We are not aware of the full range of organisations funded to undertake cohesion work and the effectiveness of this; we would support some **mapping work** to be undertaken to better understand who is funded and identify gaps, given the importance of the sector in promoting cohesion, and that the Khan review recommends ‘investment in social cohesion to improve long-term socio-economic conditions and social capital – this is also essential for the sustainable regeneration of areas that have fallen behind.’

It is likely that in Wales, we need to increase our collective capacity and resources to support social cohesion.

Are Interventions needed to target specific groups of people, geographical areas or particular key issues?

- It is reported that current available data on social cohesion in the UK is mixed and incomplete, and this **undermines attempts to undertake a conclusive analysis of the state of cohesion nationally or locally** (Khan report). In terms of designing interventions, it is important to first improve our understanding of what makes some localities susceptible to extremism and other threats which undermine cohesion (and what makes other areas resilient). **Improved data and understanding** are essential in allowing Welsh Government, local authorities and partners to adopt a more strategic approach and target interventions both generally and for specific groups, geographies or key issues.
- The Committee should consider specific issues related to **Hong Kongers, who are a relatively small but significant group of people** living in Wales (and the UK) who may experience a similar ‘chilling effect’ to those subject to *Freedom Restricted Harassment*, due to the fact that they are affected by widely reported incidents of **transnational repression**. This may impact on their ability to form social bonds, and, as Khan states, ‘this form of harassment and resultant censorship is creating a chilling impact on freedom of expression and other democratic freedoms.’ⁱ

[China: Overseas students face harassment and surveillance in campaign of transnational repression - Amnesty International](#)

[Hong Kong offers rewards for arrest of six activists abroad - BBC News](#)

Online space/disinformation

- The recent incident whereby Elon Musk retweeted a post critiquing the Welsh Refugee Council (January 25) caused widespread impacts to individuals (staff), refugees and asylum seeker clients of the WRC. **This type of activity damages cohesion and may have a ‘chilling’ effect on the sector and on their ability to promote Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary**-a policy which has been challenged and used to cause division. This was not an isolated incident. The Khan Review cites ‘countless’ examples of victims of this Freedom Restricting Harassment, some of whose testimonies are captured in the Review. Given these issues, we support the following observations and recommendations:
 - Against a backdrop of rising social media use, disinformation and misinformation, it is imperative that **long-term and workable solutions are identified to neutralise the threats to community cohesion**.
 - Particular emphasis should be given to developing strategies to address disinformation:

The Committee will also be considering the wider context for community cohesion following targeted attacks on refugees and asylum seekers in communities across the UK during the summer of 2024.

- The targeted attacks and wider protests of last summer need to be seen not as a one off but as the **culmination of migrant-related cohesion incidents in Wales and the UK**. In Wales, while we did not experience the level of violence during the summer riots, the riots in England were preceded by a growth in activity and protests at asylum sites, starting in Penally (2020) followed by the significant tensions at Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli (2023). The protests at Llanelli went on for a protracted period and required significant policing efforts, with widely reported and long-lasting impacts on cohesion in the area.

WSMP recommendations

Community spaces

- There needs to be more focus on bridging gaps between communities so that people are not living ‘parallel lives,’ with availability of shared community spaces and funding for third sector to enable activities that bring different communities together. In communities where tensions have existed there is need to ensure dialogue takes place and the **development and investment in recovery plans**, where appropriate.

Asylum accommodation/contingency

- Future asylum accommodation systems need to embed an **effective end to end** system which prevents people falling between gaps in services and support and impacting on integration and cohesion.

- **Lesson learned from the protests at Llanelli will need regular monitoring** to assess their implementation and how the recommendations inform work at a UK level on contingency and large sites.

Structures and processes to support cohesion

- **Ongoing political leadership from Welsh Government** related to Wales as a nation of Sanctuary is vital and more focussed work is needed to enable wider public services and civil society to 'own' and deliver this message.
- Welsh Government should consider the development of a **clear narrative and communications strategy to underpin the Nation of Sanctuary Plan** to support local communications and responses. Communications strategies should address issues related to understanding of the Nation of Sanctuary policy at a community/grass roots level.
- **Comms leads from public services should work together to develop and embed responses to evolving cohesion risks** in their comms strategies, with reference to the principles outlined in the WG Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the principles outline in the chapter about the Nation of Sanctuary vision, and the Welsh Government Disinformation Toolkit.
- **We support the view of the Wales Safer Communities Network that we need stronger Welsh Government leadership and UK Government Collaboration:** Issues such as online hate, migration policy, and policing fall under UK Government powers and require more collaboration to address these challenges at a national level.
- In the wake of evolving community cohesion risks, there is a need to ensure a **review of the structures and membership of national and regional/local structures in Wales to support social cohesion and overcome tensions.** Relevant forums include the Hate Crime and Community Tensions Board, PREVENT and Community Safety Partnership forums. The Review should consider the extent to which migration related cohesion issues are fed into the wider context to prevent siloed working. WSMP, local government and all key partners should work together to collectively shape national policy and strategy around cohesion, and to ensure that there is the required x-government approach in the face of evolving risks.
- Welsh Government should consider the need for an **up-to-date community cohesion strategy and framework**, and analytical capability that assesses social cohesion and supports a strategic approach. The framework should ensure effective oversight across Wales and the UK
- **There needs to be a consistent approach to tensions monitoring across local authorities**, and improved line of sight between tensions monitoring and the intelligence gathered by Community Coordinators - with strategic partners and local government- to inform an overall joined up approach to cohesion.
- As highlighted by the Wales Safer Communities network, while CSPs report clear escalation routes and good working relationships at times of crisis, **maintaining clear and consistent communication internally and externally is challenging.** Concerted work should take place, led by the

Home Office working with contracted providers, Strategic Migration Partnerships, local government and public services to **consider lessons learned from violent protests (and preceding incidents) and to shape future emergency responses**. Particular attention should be given to communications for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and wider BAME communities on staying safe and how to report hate crime.

End note

In writing this response, we have not had the capacity to capture and highlight the many positive aspects of cohesion in Wales and the extent to which, at a local level, there are vibrant, cohesive and inclusive communities. This is testament to the fostering of a welcoming culture (Nos narrative) and also to the work of a wide range of partners from local government to the voluntary and community sector and civil society. It is hoped that responses to this Enquiry, and indeed ongoing work, will capture some of the positives, in order to obtain a balance perspective.

¹ The Khan report cites evidence gathered which ‘reveals a wide-spread phenomenon of extreme forms of harassment leading individuals into silence, self-censoring, or abandoning their democratic rights. The Reviewer calls this **freedom-restricting harassment** (FRH), defined as when people experience or witness threatening, intimidatory or abusive harassment online and/or offline which is intended to make people or institutions censor or *self-censor out of fear*. The report highlights examples of FRH (FRH involves but is not limited to, acts of doxing, inciting hatred and violence against individuals and their families, sending death and rape threats, and other forms of threatening behaviour). It states that ‘this form of

harassment and resultant censorship is creating a 'chilling impact' on freedom of expression and other democratic freedoms and that **'victims of freedom-restricting harassment suffer devastating impacts yet are often not treated as victims or offered the support they need'**.

[The Khan Review: executive summary, key findings and recommendations - GOV.UK](#)

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i Gydlyniant Cymdeithasol](#)

This response was submitted to the [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) on the [inquiry into Social Cohesion](#)

SC 29

Ymateb gan: Rhwydwaith Cymunedau Mwy Diogel Cymru

Response from: Wales Safer Communities Network

Thursday 27 February 2025

Wales Safer Communities Network Response to Senedd Cymru's call for evidence on Social Cohesion

Closed 14 February - permitted extension until 28 February 2025

Please find the Wales Safer Communities Network response to the Equality and Inclusion Committees call for evidence on Social Cohesion. This response has been drawn from information supplied by Community Safety Partnerships across Wales. With significant input from Mid and South West Wales and the North East Wales Community Cohesion Team (Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire).

The Wales Safer Communities Network was established in January 2021 following the recommendations of the Welsh Government's Working Together for Safer Communities Review. The Network aims to become the strategic voice for community safety in Wales, working collaboratively to champion and support community safety partnership working, and influence the shaping and development of national policy and local practice.

The key issues which impact social cohesion in Wales

Isolation & Service Accessibility: Many rural communities face challenges in accessing services, which can lead to social exclusion and isolation, particularly for ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ communities, asylum seekers, and older people.

The dispersal of asylum seekers to rural areas presents integration challenges, where infrastructure and support networks are limited. Although Councils are working hard to look to offer support, transport links and access to amenities such as youth clubs, GP services or day centres are examples of challenges faced.

However, isolation and disconnection can happen in any community and there are potential risks for individuals who withdraw from society and look to other influences, such as online chatrooms or websites. Current extremist views driven by far-right or

far-left ideologies are monitored closely. Other areas of extremism with growing concern include individuals who self-proclaim as Incels (or Involuntarily Celibate), who perceive a crisis for men and oppose feminism. Often holding views that accept, even condone violence against women.

There is no one cause of isolation, radicalisation or holding extremist views. However, there is a growing amount of research showing a connection between individuals in the criminal justice system and those with extreme ideologies as having neuro divergence. Neurodivergence can often manifest as making one feel different, unaccepted and at odds with the world around them and may lead to isolation. Promoting greater awareness and understanding of Neurodivergence in order that people feel understood and sufficient needs are met, may help to reduce isolation and feelings of unacceptance.

Hate Crime & Discrimination: Whilst official Home Office Statistics for 2023-2024 showed a small 2% decrease in recorded Hate Crime in Wales compared to the previous year. Partners working in the community have noted an increase of hate crime and hate speech (not all recorded) particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, religious minorities, and asylum seekers. Local authorities and regional cohesion teams work closely with police and third-sector partners to raise awareness of how to report.

As a result of the rioting and disorder seen across parts of England following the Stockport murders last summer, there is a need for relevant programmes of work to ensure partners strengthen their working relationships with the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities in their areas. Whilst Wales did not see the level of race related hate that many communities across the UK witnessed following the tragic Southport attacks, our communities have certainly felt the impact. Many community members across Wales have reported incidents of discrimination and noted feeling the need to justify their sense of belonging within their education setting, workplace or just as part of their community.

Challenges in Engaging Diverse Communities: Communities across Wales are becoming more diverse, in part due to the roll out of full asylum dispersal across all UK local authorities alongside the various resettlement schemes. And as such it is imperative that any new commissioned services and programmes of work must reflect changes in demography, particularly in rural areas. Real and perceived pressures on existing services and the polarising nature of public discourse means that the need for community cohesion interventions is greater than ever.

Our diverse communities in Wales have varying needs, languages, and levels of trust in authorities. Reaching marginalised or reluctant audiences can be particularly challenging, especially during times of heightened tension. Ineffective engagement with these communities can lead to misunderstandings, increased resistance, and the risk of escalation during protests or unrest.

Youth Anti-Social Behaviour: Across the partnership landscape there has been an increased challenge in responding to Youth ASB that relates to noted cohesion issues. An increased gang culture with associated violence and weapons can be intimidating, isolating and confrontational. Dangerous or inconsiderate use of e-bikes

and e-scooters can cause frustration and anger whilst linked to organised crime such as drugs county lines that creates fear and concern. Partners have shared that they themselves feel unsupported. Courts and Youth Justice are seen as being reluctant to pursue cases of minors; however, by not offering more severe penalties (when all other interventions have been unsuccessful) it creates a feeling within the wider community that Councils and Police are falling to take action. With limited perceived deterrents, communities feel the authorities are letting them down and indeed the youths involved, leading to anger and mistrust directed at all public bodies.

The Home Office are committed to the idea of introducing Youth Futures Hubs and Prevention Partnerships in an attempt to address the concerns above. However, there are ongoing discussions in Wales around how best this can and should be delivered given the existing structures in place. Welsh partners are keen for the UK Government to use current governance/meeting infrastructure to avoid duplication of resources and effort. Discussions continue in this space.

Schools: Our partners have shared concerns over a lack of coordinated approach to address racial, inter racial, discriminatory hate and ASB incidents in schools. With inconsistency around messages and reporting.

Following the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding for the All Wales School Liaison Programme, which provided a national framework and programme of delivery for primary and secondary schools in Wales, the Police and Crime Commissioners have committed to continue providing support to schools but this will no longer be a coordinated programme and will be driven by local need.

Given the increasing external influences on children there is a strong desire by all partners to build and maintain positive relationships with young people. Key to this is working alongside education settings to help identify and address issues at source. As such, the decision for WG to pull away from funding the School Liaison programme seems at odds with the Future Generations Act and a missed opportunity to ensure a national approach to educate young people on social cohesion issues.

Influence of online narrative: Whilst this enquiry may not explicitly look to address online influences, the impact and challenges faced by local authorities and partners to respond to misinformation is significant. The rise of misinformation, particularly online, has contributed to an increasing negative narrative around migration, LGBTQ+, misogyny and antisemitism leading to growing tensions and hostility.

Online influences are recognised to significantly contribute to community tensions and community cohesion more broadly.

Specific platforms such as Facebook, Discord, X (formerly Twitter) and many others are used to share, encourage or perpetuate negative narratives. There is often an echo chamber leading to internalisation of messaging and focusing on people's fears and bias' and can be used in different ways to identify opportunity, encourage a specific narrative for a prolonged period or act to inflame reactions and emotions.

Misinformation spreads quickly, posts uploaded on social media are often within legal parameters and likely to be posed as facts. Local communities are impacted and influenced by online narratives both locally and worldwide. Negative narratives spread fear, distrust and foster hatred. All partners shared with us deep concerns around how the unregulated nature of social media and other media outlets impact on local lives and behaviours, some events are listed where social media has enabled or supported actions:

- In areas where there are sustained challenges such as poverty and unemployment, social media often acts as background noise supporting the feelings of injustice around social inequality. Misinformation and other complex issues bubble slowly until there is a trigger-event such as the deaths of two boys killed in an e-bike collision in Ely, Cardiff or the vigil of local teenager in Mayhill, Swansea where both events led to unplanned riots and disorder.
- Organised far right groups are known to instigate collective action and protests by using social media to spread details of planned activity to like-minded individuals, who may not even be connected to the local area. Rallying support to oppose Home Office resettlement was seen in Llanelli and Penally following the settlement of asylum seekers without due community engagement.
- Groups or chatrooms use open-source information which has been collated and shared with the intention of encouraging vigilantism. For example, naming and sharing the address of known or suspected sex offenders. Whilst groups may not openly advocate violence by its nature, it is intended to encourage local activism.

Wider Community: There is an increasing need to understand the impact of wider community concerns in relations to wider global/political issues. Understanding the possible impacts on local communities and services. Some current issues:

- Russia-Ukraine
- Israel-Iran
- Anti-Asylum message
- Tommy Robinson / Donald Trump / Elon Musk
- Andrew Tate / Misogyny
- Rise in Prevent referrals

Balancing Regular Services with Crisis Response: During periods of unrest, public services must balance the need to deliver regular services with the demands of crisis response. However, managing public safety can divert resources from routine operations, such as social services, waste management, and other essential functions which can result in disruptions to everyday services. This disruption may lead to, or fuel public dissatisfaction, and a longer-term impact on community trust and council reputation.

It is pertinent at this point to highlight the need to take into account the advice and guidance of Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCO) when new building developments (including retail, domestic and educational establishments) are under consideration. This advice will consider the layout of the proposals and will look to avoid issues

such as poorly lit alleyways or open receptions at schools. By considering building safety into the planning, it can reduce risks at a later stage. Regrettably, due to weak legislation in this area private building companies only need to consider DOCO advice, and do not necessarily need to adhere to it, which leaves an element of vulnerability for local authorities and police to manage locally.

Communication: Whilst many CSPs report clear escalation routes and excellent working relationships between partner agencies at times of crisis. It is recognised by partners (including Councils, Fire Services and Police) that maintaining clear and consistent communication, both internally and with external partners can be challenging and is often relationship led. This fragmented approach can lead to delays in sharing critical information with the public and other agencies.

Sharing information with communities is essential to help them understand why certain actions have been taken and manage public expectations. Miscommunication or no communication can exacerbate public anxiety which inadvertently can encourage the spread of misinformation and hinder coordinated responses.

Drawing on feedback noted at the time of the 2024 summer unrest, some councils noted that despite reassurance that intelligence suggested there was no threat to businesses in their area, some organisations still decided to close buildings. Leading to strain on local transport, loss in revenue and impacts to business reputation. It has been self-identified that partners need to ensure they build on business confidence to counter misinformed messages that can cause significant disruption.

Capacity and Resource Limitations: Most public services are working with lean staff teams and with scaled back budgets. Due to staff shortages, especially in key areas such as community engagement or emergency planning, there are huge strains on council operations. Limited capacity can result in a lack of specific expertise, slower response times, reduced ability to provide on-the-ground support, reassurance or intel gathering, and difficulty in sustaining prolonged efforts during extended periods of unrest.

Funding: Much of the limitation associated with resourcing and capacity outlined above falls to adequate funding. The committee will be very familiar with the significant pressures faced by all public services and grant funded commissioned services particularly.

Equality and community cohesion activities delivered in partnership with local authorities, are heavily reliant on government funding. There is increased concern around the lack of clarity regarding Welsh and central government plans to allocate funds to support the continuation of various projects including Welsh Government funding streams for Anti-racist Wales action plan heritage, culture, and sports funds; BAWSO and Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Teams Wales (EYST) core funded grant for youth and family support. There is also uncertainty around the future of some Home Office funds including the former Safer Streets funding, Serious Violence fund and the unknown impacts of forthcoming initiatives such as Prevention Partnerships.

In the absence of core local government finance, there has been a reliance on central government shared prosperity and levelling up funding over the past few years. Much of this funding came to an end in December 2024.

Projects financed by other work streams such as the National Lottery and Sports Wales (via Actif North Wales) have seen a reduction in funding that will inevitably have a direct impact on communities in Wales. The inclusive emphasis of the activities delivered by these funds has a meaningful impact on alleviating tension and encouraging cohesion within our communities.

Expectations on local authorities to support and comply with responsibilities relating to equality are increasing but, capacity to act is often limited.

Examples of best practice

Social Cohesion monitoring: Regular meetings across the partnership take place on a formal and informal basis.

Whilst the frequency of meetings may vary across CSPs, the below will provide a flavour of the ongoing activity in this space. Note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list:

- Weekly local multi agency meeting - review community tensions.
- Weekly Housing meeting - police, Registered Social Landlords and Councils.
- Monthly (more frequently if needed) resettlement monitoring of tension.
- Monthly meeting between Council Officers, Council Leader and local Mosque Leaders.
- Quarterly CSP meetings - Community Cohesion is a standing agenda item.
- Quarterly Hate Crime and Community Tensions meeting, Welsh Government.
- Quarterly Wales Prevent Network Group, Welsh Government.
- Channel Panels
- WLGA representation at Home Office, Asylum and Resettlement Council Senior Engagement Group (ARCSEG). There are currently discussions looking to establish a new sub-group focussing on Community Cohesion.

Online Challenges and Awareness: Local Authorities actively work to develop the public's critical thinking skills through awareness raising of online hate through public engagement events, training and social media.

Hate Crime Awareness & Reporting: Collaboration between Police, Local Authorities, schools, and community groups help to increase awareness and reporting of hate crimes.

Training provision: CSPs have facilitated training for a variety of audiences on numerous topics, for example Cohesion in Our Communities, providing information about successful projects; Power of Language – how the words we use can be harmful.

The Wales Safer Communities Network website collates upcoming Events and Training opportunities that may be relevant for practitioners working in this space. The Network also host webinars and workshops throughout the year supporting practitioners to understand current hot topic issues impacting community safety. The annual Safer Communities Awards recognises the incredible projects and people across Wales, who work to connect communities and make them safer. See [our website](#) for more information.

Awareness of key campaigns and initiatives:

Public services promote and get involved to a greater / lesser degree in:

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- LGBT History Month
- Refugee Week
- Roma Traveller History Month
- Hate Crime Awareness Week
- ASB Awareness Week
- Community Safety Week

Policy: Embedding Community Cohesion within Policy e.g. Equalities Plan and practices across Local authority areas with the support of the Regional Cohesion Teams.

North East Wales Multi Cultural Hub (MCH): The MCH established in 2022, with 3 years funding allocated via the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Action Plan (AWRAP) Heritage, and Sports fund, to address the needs of local Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities. The collaborative approach led by noted partners, has created the required strategic structure to empower Ethnic Minority Communities of North East Wales to lead on making the change they wish to see - [Multicultural Hub 2025 Overview](#).



Multi-cultural Hub
Aug24.pdf

Safer Streets/ Serious Violence Project: Please see attached reports, noted project and similar project have provided the required engagement with young people who are risk of being influence by extreme narrative.



Serious Violence
Funding, Outreach Pa



Safer Streets5 ASB
Project.Wrexham. Jani



Safer Streets 5. ASB
Wrexham. July 24.pdf



Safer Streets
ASB.Holywell, Outreat

Case study: Walsall for All

Following a series of challenging events in the Walsall, England (Bescot murder, mosque stabbings, bomb threats etc.) partner organisations adopted the Resilient Communities Model. This approach focusses on a collaborative method that fosters ownership and pride in the community. For more information see: [Walsall for All | England](#)

What support the Welsh Government provides to community groups and organisations and identify whether there are any opportunities to provide additional support.

Funding & Sustainability: The community cohesion programme can be vulnerable to short term funding. Any less than three years makes it difficult to maintain long-term impact. To build trust, it's important to focus less on superficial, short-term interactions with community groups, and instead, invest in developing long-term relationships with the most important communities. Greater funding stability is essential to support this.

Projects and programmes of work supported directly by WG or indirectly, such as the below, alongside other community/social focused projects, are of significant value as they provide the opportunities to create sustainable and meaningful relationships with communities who require support.

- Welsh Government Anti-Racist Action Plan (AWRAP)
- North East Wales Multi Cultural Hub (MCH)
- Community to School programmes
- Actif North Wales

Support for Rural Areas: Most funding and resources/services tend to focus on urban areas, whereas rural communities need tailored support to address unique challenges.

Stronger Welsh Government leadership and UK Government Collaboration: Issues such as online hate, immigration policy, and policing fall under UK Government powers. More collaboration is needed to address these challenges at a national level.

We would welcome a stronger Welsh Government Cohesion Framework which would ensure effective links between the two administrations and provide clear, process driven oversight and leadership across Wales. A strong framework would limit silo working and ensuring information and risks are shared, learned from and managed in a more joined up way.

Capacity Building for Community Groups: Many grassroots organisations lack resources to apply for funding or expand their work. Training and simplified funding processes could help.

Summary

The Network would like to recognise the significant investment of resources, policy and energy into communities from all partners across Wales. Many individuals go above and beyond to build relationships, support projects and make areas safer and better places to live and work. However, social cohesion is an area of risk that requires connected leadership, financial investment with clear nationally aligned policies to strengthen a partnership approach and discourage silo working.

As a Network we would like to see a Welsh Government Framework, with supporting communication strategies and strengthened guidance for local delivery that ensures local and national working is aligned.

This response has been written by the Business and Network Development Manager of the Wales Safer Communities Network on behalf of Network members. The Network is made up of partners involved in delivering community safety from across Wales, including Police and Crime Commissioners, Police Services, Fire and Rescue Services, Councils, Welsh Local Government Association, Probation and the Third Sector (including Registered Social Landlords)

Response submitted 27 February 2025

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Links of possible interest

[The Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion](#)

Prevent training for sectors with a statutory duty - [Awareness course](#) (Prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or from supporting terrorism).

Prevent refresher training for people who have previously completed the Awareness course - [Refresher awareness course](#)

Prevent training for private businesses - [Prevent GOV.UK training](#) and [ACT Early](#)

Prevent - explainer animation [here](#) (what Prevent is and where to get help about radicalisation concerns)

[HOPE not hate](#) - Researching, Campaigning, and Supporting Communities to build hope and oppose far-right extremism.

Children, Young People and Education Committee report looking at increased concern over exploitation of children by gangs - [‘When no one’s interested in us, the gangs take their chance’](#).

NEETS and Neurodivergence are common with those being exploited as well as those who may be drawn to extreme views/ conspiracy theories. Helping to promote an understanding of Neurodivergence may assist people to get appropriate support and feel less isolated - [eLearning - Niwrowahaniaeth Cymru | Neurodivergence Wales | National Neurodivergence Team](#)

Stop Hate UK - [Community and Local Support Groups](#)

Hate Hurts Wales - [Hate hurts Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

Research by University of York looking at resources needed for school teachers to address challenges of online misogyny - [University of York](#)

The impact of sustained poverty, on individuals and on areas can not be ignored when considering social cohesion- [UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

Impact of International influence on social media and the direct impact on services and communities in Wales- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c78xdxzyxm2o>

Agenda Item 5.1

28th March 2025

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter of 21st February and your previous invitation to appear in front of the Equality and Social Justice Committee. Let me first apologise for taking longer to reply to your letter than might have been expected.

In that letter you asked:

“Whether you believe targets could be helpful in providing focus and measuring progress in relation to child poverty in Wales”

I should preface my response here by saying that, in the role that I was invited to perform, I understood that the decision not to incorporate targets as part of the Child Poverty Strategy was one that had already been taken as part of the political process in the lead-up to the publication of that strategy. The decision of whether to set child poverty targets is rightly the responsibility of the Minister. The work undertaken by officials and myself in relation to the monitoring framework was essentially operating downstream of the Child Poverty Strategy, as published, and to that extent I have been surprised by the suggestion in some quarters that it might have culminated in the introduction of such targets.

The reasoning put to me for not including targets within the Strategy, in the course of a number of conversations, was (1) that there is no single measure that captures the reality of poverty and thus that a relative income target, on its own, is too simplistic to reflect this reality and (2) that the Welsh Government does not have the primary levers – namely, full powers in relation to social security and taxation policy – that would be required to guarantee significant improvement in relation to (relative income) poverty. The first of these arguments I regard as true, though it is not an argument against targets *per se* but about against sole reliance on one kind of target - namely, a relative income poverty target. We discussed the second argument at the Equality and Social Justice Committee session on 10th February. Again, I regard this argument as being true and its consequences as being far-reaching. The limited powers Welsh Government holds in relation to, especially, social security powers, but also constraints upon and utilisation of taxation powers means that successfully *targeting* substantial reductions in the relative income poverty in Wales would be very challenging for the Welsh Government. Other measures beyond the relative income measure – for example, the material deprivation measure but also, for example, child well-being measures – rely less on tax and spend powers, but they also incorporate factors beyond the direct influence of *any* government, and are influenced significantly by the macro-economy, familial factors, and others. In a sense, then, a desire to ensure that targets, were they to be set, would relate to social outcomes that Welsh Government could, through successful policy intervention, guarantee success against, is not overcome by multidimensionality.

At the session on 10th February, it was suggested to me that I was arguing against (child) poverty targets in a general sense. I was not. Targets can often be helpful in concentrating attention and galvanising action in the cause of tackling (child) poverty. Nonetheless, poverty targets might be thought to be of greatest value when political commitment and/or will is limited but the capacity

to respond in ways to meet the target are present. This is not the circumstance here: the Welsh Government has stated that tackling child poverty is an ‘absolute priority’ but it lacks (or has constrained exercise over) the primary powers that are required to tackle the main measures of child poverty – namely, tax and social security powers. My view is that there is a tendency to acknowledge this point if not always its full significance.

At the session on 10th February, I stressed the importance of delivery in relation to anti-poverty initiatives. It is certainly true that in some cases improvements in the position of certain groups has occurred through deliberate and committed government action absent formal outcome targets. An example of this is the experience of the ‘triple lock’ in relation to State Pension uprating, which has helped to raise the incomes of pensioners across the UK, including in Wales, though the Conservative and Liberal Democrat government who pioneered it did not issue a specific target for pensioner poverty reduction. It is not the case, then, that an outcome target is *necessary* to achieve a material change in a relevant social outcome. But our experience in relation to child poverty is influenced significantly by the experience of the 1997-2010 UK Labour Government, where there were formal targets, and perhaps the weight of the legacy of that government *and its specific approach* is reasonable given its success in relation to child poverty reduction is unmatched in the context of the last 40 years.

The Welsh Government *could* issue a series of child poverty targets, for example in relation to proportion of children in Wales experiencing relative income poverty. But whether those targets were met would very substantially be a function of policy decisions made at Westminster. It is in my view understandable that Welsh Government would feel uncomfortable about this circumstance and I am unpersuaded by the suggestion in some quarters that this should be equated with a lack of ambition on their part.

At the time of the decision to discontinue Communities First, I was uneasy with the emphasis that was being placed on movements in the relative income poverty rate in debates about the merits of that programme. My view at the time was that the relative income poverty rate was too demanding a target to be helpful in evaluating whether the Communities First programme was doing good work and whether it was a good use of public money and that reference to that target was unhelpful for the purpose of considering those questions. That remains my view. A lesson I take from that episode is that, in the current and recent Welsh context, monitoring of social outcomes, while important, should occur alongside scrutiny of policy outputs themselves – e.g. how many families are being supported by Welsh Government initiatives, how effective that support has been, and at what cost it has come at.

“Why you believe the multi-indicator framework approach adopted by the Welsh Government is the most effective method of measuring progress against the strategy, in light of research in the field of reducing child poverty.”

This is addressed at point 3.3 of my Independent Review, which explains that:

‘The advantages of a social outcomes-based framework approach are, in my view, (i) that child wellbeing is genuinely multidimensional and that a multidimensional approach can better capture this reality than any single indicator (Hick, 2014b); (ii) that it represents an improvement over exclusive reliance on, especially, a relative income indicator, which is most obviously

sensitive to tax and transfer policies that are not, in the main, within the remit of Welsh Government powers. One disadvantage is that there is potential distance between the activities of Welsh Government and these outcomes because they have a variety of influences and determinants besides Welsh Government activities. A focus on such outcomes, as opposed to monitoring progress based on policy outputs, thus involves a certain degree of risk. One such risk is that deterioration in performance on these outcomes may lead to unwarranted and unjustified criticism of Welsh Government, since this may be the result of wider socio-economic trends and not any failure in Welsh Government initiatives. It may also mean that Welsh Government initiatives can 'succeed' against individual programme objectives, but this may not be perceptible because the outcomes are capturing a broader and more global whole. To this extent, triangulation via the monitoring of policy outputs (and lived experience), as is proposed, will be important in order to provide a rounded assessment of both children's circumstances and the performance of Welsh Government initiatives.'

"Why key indicators such as the child poverty rate by housing tenure, the proportion of children in poverty who sit A-levels or go to university; and tooth aged 7 were omitted from the set of measures included in the framework."

In general terms, the value of a multi-indicator framework is that it goes some way to capturing the richness of the circumstances of children's lives, but it is important that it remains manageable in scope. At the session on 10th February we discussed the trade-off between realism and complexity. These specific suggestions are interesting and in discussion with other parties I have heard others mentioned too. The risk is that in including too many items, one risks prioritising nothing, as well as potentially resulting in duplication (point 4.1.4 of my Independent Review). In discussions with officials, I would at times have advocated moderation when faced with suggestions to include a significant number of additional items. There is sometimes a temptation when working with multidimensional frameworks to imagine that by adding just one more measure the perfect framework might be arrived at. While I am in favour of multidimensional frameworks along the lines of the principles I outlined in Section 4 of my Independent Review, I am also of the view that the addition of measures at the margin involves trade-offs and that demands for ever-increasing numbers of measures should be scrutinised carefully given this adds greater complexity to the framework as a whole.

In terms of these specific suggestions, housing costs feature in the measure of income poverty itself as income is measured on an After Housing Cost basis. To the extent that housing costs rise and drive growing numbers of families into poverty, this will show up in the main income measures included in the framework. In discussions with officials, a desire was expressed that disaggregation of the main measures would focus on groups with protected characteristics and they pointed to the text of the Child Poverty Strategy in supporting this position. It would be possible to disaggregate the income-based measures by housing tenure, though, if this were added to the framework, I might ask why this disaggregation had been included but others had not. The proportion sitting A-levels or attending university has some overlap with the measure that is included based on National Indicator 22: 'Percentage of people aged 16 to 24 in education, employment or training'. The outcomes considered here are broader than education alone, but this is probably desirable (and more consistent with an ability to interpret the measures in normative terms for children and young people themselves, as per point 4.1.1. of my review) given

that it is not the case that attending university provides the only valuable route for young people on leaving school. The tooth decay indicator is not something we discussed and is interesting. My initial response would be that if it is a consequence of material poverty then it may duplicate or already show up in the income and/or material deprivation measure, and that some scrutiny would be required in relation to whether it meets the relevant reporting requirements in terms of the robustness of the data (but it may).

“Why the national indicator for the percentage of children with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours was not included as one of the relevant indicators in the framework.”

I believe the reasoning was that it did not relate directly to the contents of the Child Poverty Strategy. This reflects the hybrid nature of the framework, which is largely intending to capture child outcomes but is also tasked with monitoring progress against the Child Poverty Strategy itself.

I hope that these responses are helpful to your Committee and its work.

Yours sincerely,

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

Prof. Rod Hick
Cardiff University

Professor Rod Hick
Cardiff University

21 February 2025

Dear Professor Hick,

Child Poverty Strategy and Monitoring Framework

Thank you for giving evidence on 10 February. As highlighted during the session Members are concerned that there are no targets within the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy and want to understand how the lack of targets may impact the effectiveness of the Monitoring Framework. These concerns were highlighted previously in our [report](#) on the Draft Child Poverty Strategy.

You will be aware of considerable support for targets as a means of ensuring that governments focus attention, action and resources on tackling poverty.¹ Nevertheless, the Welsh Government chose not to accept our recommendation to set headline targets either in the strategy or the monitoring framework.

Within this context we would appreciate if you could clarify:

- whether you believe targets could be helpful in providing focus and measuring progress in relation to child poverty in Wales;
- why you believe the multi-indicator framework approach adopted by the Welsh Government is the most effective method of measuring progress against the strategy, in light of research in the field of reducing child poverty;
- why key indicators such as the child poverty rate by housing tenure, the proportion of children in poverty who sit A-levels or go to university; and tooth

¹ See Equality and Social Justice Committee "Calling time etc."

decay rates in children aged 7 were omitted from the set of measures included in the framework; and

- why the national indicator for the percentage of children with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours was not included as one of the relevant indicators in the framework.

It would be appreciated if you could provide a response by 14 March. With thanks in advance for your cooperation on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Senedd Cymru

Agenda Item 5.2



Jane Hutt MS

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip,

Welsh Government

5th Floor

Tŷ Hywel

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1SN

3rd April 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 17th March 2025 and for the helpful update you provided on the cross-departmental meeting between health, education and crime and justice colleagues on speech and language therapy provision within the youth justice system. It is welcome to have clarification that Welsh Government believe that it is for youth justice service teams to provide any further services relating to speech language and communication needs, beyond that delivered by their Local Health Board, in order to deliver on their reserved statutory role.

As you suggest, we are aware that there are currently a small number of funding streams for local authorities to buy in speech and language therapy provision. However, we speak regularly to youth justice managers across Wales and are concerned that as the Ministry of Justice Turnaround programme funded services are already in place and the funding is reduced from previous years, the continued funding for 2025/6 is unlikely to support the funding of speech and language therapists in areas which do not already have provision.

We recently met with Sir Nic Dakin MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice to raise our concerns about the postcode lottery of speech and language therapy provision for young people within the criminal justice system in Wales and understand that the Minister was due to meet with you in March.

We are very grateful for your suggestion of a meeting with us and would be keen to receive an update on discussions with the Ministry of Justice as part of the conversation with yourself.

My colleague, Caroline Walters, External Affairs Manager for Wales (caroline.walters@rcslt.org) would be pleased to organise such a meeting if possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pippa Cotterill', is centered on the page.

Pippa Cotterill
Head of Wales Office

Cc: Jenny Rathbone MS, Chair, Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee

Ruth Crowder, Chief Allied Health Professions Adviser, Welsh Government

Catherine Pape and Claire Butler, National Speech, Language and Communication Co-ordinators,
Welsh Government

Alison Lott, Lead for Youth Justice, Welsh Government

Agenda Item 5.3

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

Deisebau@senedd.cymru

senedd.cymru/SeneddDeisebau

0300 200 6565

Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Petitions@senedd.wales

senedd.wales/SeneddPetitions

0300 200 6565

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair

Equality and Social Justice Committee

Senedd Cymru

3 April 2025

Dear Jenny,

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

The Petitions Committee met on 24 March and considered the above petition, submitted by Rhiannon Goodall.

The Committee agreed a number of actions relating to this petition. This included writing to you, as Chair of the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee, to ask to what extent the Committee had looked at the situation in Caerau during its follow-up inquiry into fuel poverty and the Warm Homes Programme, and how you think that had influenced the Welsh Government in its new Warm Homes programme.

It was also agreed to write to the Welsh Government for confirmation of the position regarding the petitioners' request for a public inquiry; to invite the petitioners and the local councillor supporting their campaign to come and meet with the Committee; and to write to Bridgend County Borough Council to ask about progress with the remedial work funded by Welsh Government and the UK Government. In light of those agreed actions the Committee will be keeping the petition open.

The full details of the Committee's consideration of the petition, including the correspondence and the actions agreed by the Committee can be found here: [P-06-1491 We demand a fair deal for residents affected by the Arbed and CESP scheme](#)

I would be grateful if you could send any response by e-mail to the clerking team at petitions@senedd.wales.



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 5.4

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA-JH-0452-25

Buffy Williams MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

02 April 2025

Dear Buffy and Jenny

Thank you for your letter of 20 March, setting out questions from your two Committees in relation to the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill LCM. I am aware of a separate letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee which asks a similar question to your sixth question. I am responding in my capacity as Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and also on behalf of the Minister for Further and Higher Education, as the Welsh Minister who has laid this LCM.

What are your views on clause 38 and whether there are any concerns about the remaining provisions set out in the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and elements of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022?

As noted in the LCM, we are pleased that clause 38 will repeal the aspects of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 which we believe relate to devolved children's social care. Supporting this repeal will give effect to the previously expressed will of Senedd Members (under the relevant Illegal Migration Act LCMs) regarding the previous UK Government legislation in this area.

Our concerns about the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which were also set out in a [related LCM](#), remain. We remain of the view that Senedd Cymru already legislated in regard to support for unaccompanied children in Wales through the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 20214 and the Welsh Government position in relation to the age assessment of unaccompanied asylum seeking children is set out in our Age Assessment Toolkit. We would like to see the related provisions repealed in time.

The wider provisions within both the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Migration Act 2023 relate to reserved functions and obligations. We engage closely with UK Government counterparts to try to ensure we can apply our Nation of Sanctuary policy to its fullest extent within the Immigration Rules and processes established by the UK Government.

What are your views on the retrospective nature of clause 51?

The Clause seeks to address the possible historic lack of legal vires for fees charged throughout the UK by way of provision included in the Bill at clause 51. This clause also

addresses the historic legal vires for the Home Office Visas and Nationality Service (a reserved matter) and the Department for Education non-UK Early Years Qualifications Recognition Service applicable to England.

The UK ENIC Service users, which includes those in Wales, will incur no additional burden from this measure. This is justified as a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aims of ensuring that the legislative position is clear and certain.

The UK ENIC Service has been managed by Ecctis Ltd on behalf of the UK Government since at least 2014. The retrospective legislation mitigates the risk that service users who have been charged fees would bring restitution claims against the UK Government, which could result in those historic costs being transferred to the taxpayer.

What discussions have you had with the 17 organisations in Wales with active membership of the UK ENIC Service?

The UK Government leads a UK ENIC Stakeholder reference group, including representatives from sector bodies and end user groups from across the UK. Welsh Government officials also attend. No separate Welsh Government discussions have been held with the 17 organisation in Wales with active membership of the UK ENIC Service

Discussions between Devolved Governments and UK Government officials are ongoing with a view to strengthen Devolved Government oversight of the new UK ENIC contract (operational from 28 March 2025), specifically the establishment of a new oversight group that will regularly meet to scrutinise and monitor the service. To support Welsh Government understanding of current and future trends concerning the international comparisons of qualifications, organisations in Wales with active membership of the UK ENIC Service will be invited to share their views with Welsh Government officials in advance of these meetings.

Have you sought any clarification about how the issues addressed in clause 51 arose in the first place and whether the Home Office is conducting a review of the situation?

During the process of re-procuring the UK ENIC service in 2024, the Department of Education identified a possible lack of legal vires for the fees charged by the service provider. The Department for Education informed Devolved Governments of the issue and have been in regular contact since.

Have you received an estimate for the volume and value of fees charged without statutory authority and the impact this has had on people living in Wales?

During 2024 there were over 700 enquiries to the UK ENIC service made by Welsh member organisations - the majority of which came from Welsh universities. During the period 2022 – 2024 there were over 1400 applications to UK ENIC from individuals living in Wales. There will be a much larger number of individuals applying from overseas intending to study or work in Wales.

The impact on service users from Wales is that they will not incur any additional financial burden from Clause 51 and will be unable to recover fees paid for the services in the past. Service users previously charged have received the benefit of the intended service.

Why are you not seeking consent for clause 53 of the Bill? Clause 53 contains a regulation making power for the Secretary of State to make consequential provision. These regulations may amend, repeal or revoke any enactment. Clause 53(3)(c) states that “enactment” includes an enactment contained in, or in an instrument made under, a Measure or Act of Senedd Cymru.

Clause 53 was not included in the LCM as it is a narrow power which is restricted to making required amendments to existing legislation as a direct consequence of the provisions of the Bill coming into force. This power will primarily be used in relation to reserved subject matters, as the majority of the Bill is outside legislative competence.

I hope these responses assists the Committees in considering the LCM.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jane Hutt AS/MS

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

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

Vikki Howells MS
Minister for Further and Higher Education

20 March 2025

Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill LCM

Dear Jane and Vikki,

As you will know, the Business Committee has referred the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) to the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Equality and Social Justice Committee with a reporting deadline of 2 May 2025.

We are writing to you jointly on certain issues relating to the LCM:

1. What are your views on clause 38 and whether there are any concerns about the remaining provisions set out in the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and elements of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022?
2. What are your views on the retrospective nature of clause 51?
3. What discussions have you had with the 17 organisations in Wales with active membership of the UK ENIC Service?
4. Have you sought any clarification about how the issues addressed in clause 51 arose in the first place and whether the Home Office is conducting a review of the situation?
5. Have you received an estimate for the volume and value of fees charged without statutory authority and the impact this has had on people living in Wales?

6. Why are you not seeking consent for clause 53 of the Bill? Clause 53 contains a regulation making power for the Secretary of State to make consequential provision. These regulations may amend, repeal or revoke any enactment. Clause 53(3)(c) states that "enactment" includes an enactment contained in, or in an instrument made under, a Measure or Act of Senedd Cymru. We would be grateful if you could provide a response no later Friday 28 March. If you have any concerns with this timetable please don't hesitate to contact our clerks at any time.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education
Committee



Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

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

Agenda Item 5.5


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA-JH-0452-25 / JH/PO/174/25

Mike Hedges MS
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

11 April 2025

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 20 March, seeking further information about our position in relation to clause 53 of the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill LCM. I have also responded to a separate letter about this LCM from the Chairs of the Equality and Social Justice Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

Why are you not seeking consent for clause 53 of the Bill? Clause 53 contains a regulation making power for the Secretary of State to make consequential provision. These regulations may amend, repeal or revoke any enactment. Clause 53(3)(c) states that “enactment” includes an enactment contained in, or in an instrument made under, a Measure or Act of Senedd Cymru.

Clause 53 was not included in the LCM as it is a narrow power which is restricted to making required amendments to existing legislation as a direct consequence of the provisions of the Bill coming into force. This power will primarily be used in relation to reserved subject matters, as the majority of the Bill is outside legislative competence.

I hope this response assists the Committee in considering the LCM.



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

Agenda Item 5.6

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: JH/PO/178/25

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru

SeneddLJC@senedd.wales

14 April 2025

Dear Chair,

Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement: Forthcoming Intergovernmental Meetings

I am writing in accordance with the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement to notify you that I attended the third meeting of the Four Nations Group on the UK Government Child Poverty Strategy. As I noted in my letter to you in November the purpose of the group is to embed Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland into the development of a UK-wide strategy on Child Poverty. The group will provide the opportunity for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to inform the development of the UK-wide strategy and ensure the proposed strategy complements existing and developing strategies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The meeting, held on the 19th of March was chaired by Catherine McKinnell MP - Minister for Education. Also in attendance was Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP – Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Scottish Government and Gordon Lyons MLA, Minister for Communities

The meeting focused on a number of areas relevant to the UK Government Child Poverty Strategy including Employment, Social Services and Financial Inclusion. During this meeting I highlighted key Welsh Government policies on childcare and transport, fair work, employment and skills, the Welsh Benefits charter and income maximisation. I also took the opportunity to highlight the importance of any welfare reforms considering the benefit cap and two child limit.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

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

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@gov.wales

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

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

I am copying this letter to Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs; the Children, Young People and Education Committee; and the Equalities and Social Justice Committee.

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

Jane Hutt AS/MS

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

Agenda Item 5.7



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

Room 430
Parliament Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

14 April 2025
Our ref: CC/25/167

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

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Dear Chairperson

Proposed UK Welfare Reforms – Potential Joint Devolved Committee Response

Thank you for your email of 1 April 2025 outlining the Equality and Social Justice Committee's consideration of our correspondence.

The Committee for Communities considered your update at its meeting on 10 April 2025 and Members noted their thanks for the information provided. The Committee agreed it is content to wait until after your next meeting on the 28 April before deciding on its next steps on this issue.

I can confirm that we had contacted the Social Justice and Social Security Committee in the Scottish Parliament regarding this matter.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Colm Gildernew MLA

Chairperson of the Committee for Communities

Agenda Item 5.8

Dear Chair and Members of the Equality and Social Justice Committee,

On behalf of Disability Wales, we are writing to request that the Committee considers launching an urgent inquiry into the impact of the proposed welfare cuts on disabled people in Wales outlined in the UK Government's *Pathways to Work* green paper.

There are 275,000 people in receipt of PIP in Wales representing 11% of the working age population, compared with 7% in England. Furthermore 100,000 people in Wales receive the LWRCA element of Universal Credit. Therefore the proposed cuts will disproportionately affect disabled people as well as Carers and wider communities in Wales and pose a significant threat to their human rights and wellbeing. We are deeply disappointed that given the dire consequences for Wales, this was not adequately addressed either in the Impact Assessment published by the UK Government or the subsequent letter from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the First Minister.

As you will know from your committee's recent Inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap there are persistent structural barriers facing disabled people in the job market which raises concerns about whether these cuts will make any material difference to their employment prospects. A lack of flexible working hours, limited remote opportunities, insufficient employer awareness, a mistrust in DWP and job centres, and long delays in Access to Work support all contribute to an inaccessible employment landscape. This is particularly the case for those with fluctuating or complex conditions, for whom traditional 9–5 roles are not viable. We must also be aware that half of the disabled population are already in work, for those who receive PIP, if they are no longer eligible for it, these proposals could hinder their ability to sustain work.

Until the labour market is meaningfully reformed to become inclusive of disabled people's needs alongside addressing other structural barriers in education, housing and transport, imposing further benefit cuts is not only ineffective but deeply unjust. As you know the Welsh Government's draft Disabled People's Action Plan is aimed at tackling these systemic barriers but could be seriously undermined if thousands of disabled people are pushed further into poverty.

We urge the Committee to launch an urgent inquiry to explore:

- the evidence of the impacts of welfare changes on poverty and employment in Wales;
- the experience of disabled people in Wales of the current welfare system and their views on the impacts the changes could have on them; and
- the potential impacts of the welfare changes on Welsh Government's policies and plans to tackle poverty and inequality among disabled people
- the feasibility of devolving responsibility for the policy and delivery of benefits such as PIP to Wales

Disability Wales and our members would be happy to provide further information or appear before the Committee, should that be helpful.

Yours sincerely,
Disability Wales



Agenda Item 5.9

[Via email]

Dear Chair and Clerk of the Equality and Social Justice Committee,

As Chair of the Senedd's Cross-Party Group on Disability, I write in support of Disability Wales' attached letter sent to you, requesting that the Committee considers launching an urgent inquiry into the impact of the proposed welfare cuts on disabled people in Wales outlined in the UK Government's Pathways to Work green paper.

I would therefore be grateful if you could give this your attention and copy me on your response accordingly.

Thank you.

Regards

Mark
Chair, Cross-Party Group on Disability

<p>Mark Isherwood MS Member of the Welsh Parliament for North Wales Welsh Conservative Party</p>	<p>Mark Isherwood AS Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Gogledd Cymru Plaid Geidwadol Cymru</p>	
<p>0300 200 7217</p>		

[Attachment]

Dear Chair and Members of the Equality and Social Justice Committee,

On behalf of Disability Wales, we are writing to request that the Committee considers launching an urgent inquiry into the impact of the proposed welfare cuts on disabled people in Wales outlined in the UK Government's *Pathways to Work* green paper.

There are 275,000 people in receipt of PIP in Wales representing 11% of the working age population, compared with 7% in England. Furthermore 100,000 people in Wales receive the LWRCA element of Universal Credit. Therefore the proposed cuts will disproportionately affect disabled people as well as Carers and wider communities in Wales and pose a significant threat to their human rights and wellbeing. We are deeply disappointed that given the dire consequences for Wales, this was not adequately addressed either in the Impact Assessment published by the UK Government or the subsequent letter from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the First Minister.

As you will know from your committee's recent Inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap there are persistent structural barriers facing disabled people in the job market which raises concerns about whether these cuts will make any material difference to their employment prospects. A lack of flexible working hours, limited remote opportunities, insufficient employer awareness, a mistrust in DWP and job centres, and long delays in Access to Work support all contribute to an inaccessible employment landscape. This is particularly the case for those with fluctuating or complex conditions, for whom traditional 9–5 roles are not viable. We must also be aware that half of the disabled population are already in work, for those who receive PIP, if they are no longer eligible for it, these proposals could hinder their ability to sustain work.

Until the labour market is meaningfully reformed to become inclusive of disabled people's needs alongside addressing other structural barriers in education, housing and transport, imposing further benefit cuts is not only ineffective but deeply unjust. As you know the Welsh Government's draft Disabled People's Action Plan is aimed at tackling these systemic barriers but could be seriously undermined if thousands of disabled people are pushed further into poverty.

We urge the Committee to launch an urgent inquiry to explore:

- the evidence of the impacts of welfare changes on poverty and employment in Wales;
- the experience of disabled people in Wales of the current welfare system and their views on the impacts the changes could have on them; and
- the potential impacts of the welfare changes on Welsh Government's policies and plans to tackle poverty and inequality among disabled people
- the feasibility of devolving responsibility for the policy and delivery of benefits such as PIP to Wales

Disability Wales and our members would be happy to provide further information or appear before the Committee, should that be helpful.

Yours sincerely,
Disability Wales

Agenda Item 8

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

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Agenda Item 9

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

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