

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

---

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Hybrid

Meeting date: 6 October 2025

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

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

---

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

### 2 New petitions

2.1 P-06-1538 Protect full stroke services at Bronglais Hospital; prevent downgrade to Treat and Transfer

(Pages 1 – 14)

2.2 P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit

(Pages 15 – 17)

2.3 P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital

(Pages 18 – 30)

2.4 P-06-1514 Welsh Government should commission a Wales-wide inquiry into sexual exploitation by grooming gangs

(Pages 31 – 41)

2.5 P-06-1518 Provide more timely and accessible mental health support for children under 10, including by referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

(Pages 42 – 49)

2.6 P-06-1521 Give park home residents in Wales the right to a water meter

(Pages 50 – 57)

2.7 P-06-1526 Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In!

(Pages 58 – 65)



- 2.8 P-06-1535 Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales  
(Pages 66 – 73)
- 2.9 P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in  
'open' communal rooms  
(Pages 74 – 94)
- 2.10 P-06-1546 Welsh Government should fund the Llanbedr relief road!  
(Pages 95 – 102)
- 2.11 P-06-1547 Sea bottom trawling is killing our marine wildlife...Stop  
bulldozing our marine wildlife!  
(Pages 103 – 109)

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

- 3.1 P-06-1288 Deliver Magor and Undy Walkway Station, part of the Burns  
Delivery Programme, as a quick win  
(Pages 110 – 114)
- 3.2 P-06-1357 Draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan for Wales  
(Pages 115 – 121)
- 3.3 P-06-1378 We want farm subsidies to be extended to small scale and market  
gardeners  
(Pages 122 – 123)
- 3.4 P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill Formula in Wales – the funding system for  
primary care  
(Pages 124 – 129)
- 3.5 P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a  
Fair Process for Providers and Parent  
(Pages 130 – 137)

### **Papers to note**

**4 P-06-1497 End Welsh Govt funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies**

(Pages 138 – 144)

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

Document is Restricted

## P-06-1538 Protect full stroke services at Bronglais Hospital; prevent downgrade to Treat and Transfer

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 October 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 Hydref 2025

**Reference:** SR25/12212

### Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1538

**Petition title:** Protect full stroke services at Bronglais Hospital; prevent downgrade to Treat and Transfer

**Text of petition:** Hywel Dda University Health Board's consultation proposes removing Bronglais Hospital's full stroke service, forcing patients from Ceredigion, Powys, and South Meirionnydd into risky, long-distance transfers to hospitals in Llanelli or Haverfordwest. We urge the Senedd and Welsh Government to intervene immediately, insisting HDdUHB fully assesses these impacts and commits to maintaining Bronglais as a stroke rehabilitation unit, protecting vital health services in Mid Wales.

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



# 1. Background

Bronglais Hospital in Aberystwyth serves a large and predominantly rural area in Mid Wales that encompasses Ceredigion along with parts of Gwynedd and Powys. It currently provides a full range of stroke services, including hyperacute and acute care, thrombolysis (for eligible patients) and rehabilitation.

At a meeting on 29 May 2025, Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) agreed to launch a public consultation on its Clinical Services Plan. The plan includes a range of proposals for reorganising services identified by HDdUHB as being in need of change due to concerns over service resilience and patient safety.

Stroke services were one of the services identified and the plan sets out two options for how they might be reorganised:

- Option A: Patients presenting at Bronglais would be transferred to either Prince Philip Hospital in Llanelli or Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest for inpatient care. Prince Philip and Withybush would both provide 12-hours of specialist care a day.
- Option B: Patients presenting at Bronglais would be transferred to Prince Philip for typically 72 hours of inpatient care, with ongoing care provided either at Prince Philip or at Withybush. Prince Philip would provide 24-hours of specialist care a day and Withybush would provide 12-hours a day.

In both scenarios the stroke unit at Bronglais would operate as a 'treat and transfer' service only. This would mean that, while the unit would still provide an initial assessment and thrombolysis if needed, patients would be transferred to a specialist centre elsewhere after receiving initial care.

HDdUHB has stated it would mitigate any impact on families and carers by providing 'online platforms' to keep them connected. It would also aim to return patients home quicker for ongoing recovery with community service support.

Concerns have been raised about the proposals by patients and local campaigners. Among those critical of the proposals are Dr Phil Jones, the former National Clinical Lead for Stroke in Wales, along with the group Protect Bronglais Services, which was set up to oppose the changes.

These groups have criticised the proposals for overlooking the role of family and friends in stroke rehabilitation, with distances and limited transport infrastructure making regular visits impractical. Concerns have also been raised over how patients from Bronglais would be transferred to Prince Philip and Withybush and subsequently returned home, and whether this would involve the Welsh Ambulance Service. The proposal to use online platforms for patient communication has also been criticised as unrealistic, given stroke-related impairments and poor digital connectivity in the region.

Bronglais scores comparatively highly in national stroke care assessments and this has also been raised in objections to the proposals. The Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP) measures the quality and organisation of stroke care and is the source of stroke data in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Bronglais scored a B in the latest publicly available report. This compares to a C for Glangwili and Prince Philip and a B for Withybush.

HDdUHB argue the changes are necessary to safeguard stroke services, which are currently failing to meet clinical standards and do not have enough staff to support them. It also points to evidence that outcomes and standards are higher when services are consolidated and delivered from fewer hospitals, and argues that centralising services would improve staff recruitment and retention, making services more sustainable.

The public consultation on the proposals concluded on 31 August 2025 and responses are now being reviewed by HDdUHB.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government response to this petition states that while the Welsh Government sets the strategic direction for the NHS in Wales, responsibility for planning and delivering healthcare services lies with Local Health Boards. It notes that no decision has yet been made by HDdUHB on the future of stroke services in the region.

The response states that expert advice increasingly supports a shift away from the current model of stroke care towards comprehensive regional stroke centres and that this will be necessary to meet the aims of the Quality Statement for Stroke. It emphasises that HDdUHB's proposals must align with this approach while considering the full impact of any changes made.

The response also stresses the need for Local Health Boards to take a collaborative approach to service changes and that HDdUHB will be expected to work closely

with clinicians, communities, neighbouring Local Health Boards, and delivery partners such as the Stroke Association, Llais and Ceredigion Council.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The proposed changes to stroke services at Bronglais were raised during questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care on 15 January 2025.

Russell George MS highlighted the impracticality for families in Llanidloes or Machynlleth having to travel to Withybush to visit relatives, and asked what consideration had been given to Powys residents. In response, the Cabinet Secretary stated that he expected HDdUHB and Powys Teaching Health Board to be in discussions about the potential impact of the changes on patients living outside the Hywel Dda area.

Joyce Watson MS asked what discussions had taken place with HDdUHB in relation to post-stroke care. The Cabinet Secretary replied that he understood ongoing recovery would still take place closer to home under the proposed changes. He also emphasised the importance of HDdUHB collaborating with groups such as the Stroke Association and those with lived experiences when developing their plans.

Cefin Campbell MS asked for an assurance that full stroke services would be retained at Bronglais and Glangwili. In response the Cabinet Secretary stated that no decision had yet been taken by HDdUHB and no changes would be made before the outcome of the public consultation.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1538  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/02212/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions committee

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

23 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about **Petition P-06-1538 Protect full stroke services at Bronglais Hospital; prevent downgrade to Treat and Transfer**.

I understand how strongly people feel about their health services. No decision has been made by Hywel Dda University Health Board about the future of stroke services; the proposed changes are being considered as part of the health board's [clinical services plan](#).

The Welsh Government sets the strategic direction for the NHS in Wales. Health boards and NHS trusts are responsible for the planning and delivery of health service – in this instance, stroke services – for their population in line with professional standards and clinical guidance. They are supported to deliver improved stroke services by the NHS Wales Performance and Improvement Unit (previously the NHS Executive).

I have been clear in my expectation that health boards must provide safe and sustainable services which meets the needs of their population. Anyone experiencing stroke or suspected stroke, regardless of where they live, should be seen and treated as quickly as possible in the most appropriate setting which can provide the most effective treatment they require.

Unfortunately, stroke outcomes are not where we want them to be in Wales, or across the UK. The emerging expert advice is that the NHS should treat acute stroke care as a specialist service and provide it on a regional basis. The current model for the management of stroke in Wales must therefore change if we are going to realise the aims set out in the *Quality Statement for Stroke*. The changes proposed by Hywel Dda University Health Board must be aligned towards the development of comprehensive regional stroke centres. This model of care provides the NHS with an opportunity to address the fragility in some of our services, and create a sustainable workforce model, while also improving outcomes for people suffering a stroke.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales)

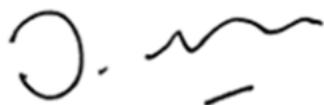
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

As with any change to NHS services, I expect health boards to rigorously consider the options available and understand the full impact of these options, ensuring the highest quality care is provided to ensure the best quality-of life-outcomes for people affected by stroke.

I also expect health boards to take a collaborative approach when putting forward proposals to change services, working with all relevant partners and stakeholders, including clinicians and local communities, neighbouring health boards and delivery partners such as the Stroke Association, Llais and Ceredigion Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

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



1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

**For the attention of:**

The Members of the Senedd Petitions Committee

Dear Member,

**Response to the letter of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services letter (23.09.25) in respect of Petition 246641: Protect Full Stroke Services at Bronglais Hospital**

**From: Lead Petitioner, Bryony Davies** for Protect Bronglais Services (PBS) with Lisa Francis, Chair of PBS

**Signatures:** Over 17,000 (10,867 online and around 7,500 paper signatures awaiting confirmation).

We note the letter of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services to the Chair of the Petitions Committee of the 23/09/25, a copy of which we received yesterday. In respect of his comments regarding the above Petition, we express both disappointment and concern.

Whilst Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) state that these proposed changes to stroke services are about improved and safer health services, the fact is that if adopted, these services won't be available for stroke patients and their families to access closer to home. Bronglais General Hospital (BGH) Aberystwyth, (*which serves patients from as far away as Tywyn, Caersws, Llanidloes, Rhayadr and Llandrindod Wells*), will see detrimental changes to its excellent Stroke Unit.

Under the proposals:

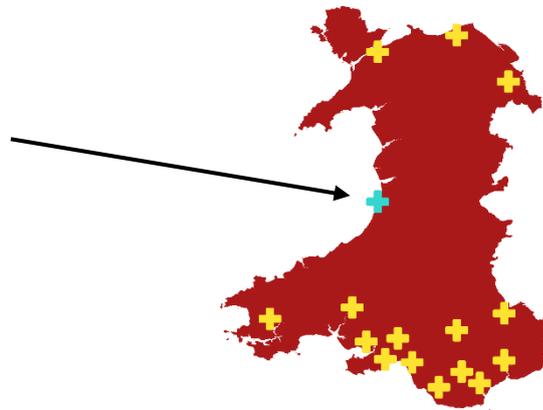
**Option A** is to send stroke patients presenting at Bronglais onward to either Prince Philip Hospital, Llanelli or to Withybush Hospital, Haverfordwest for their rehabilitation.

**Option B** is to send stroke patients presenting at Bronglais onward to Prince Philip Hospital Llanelli for 72 hours of inpatient care before being transferred again to Withybush Hospital Haverfordwest.

These plans are extremely lacking in detail.

*Keeping stroke rehabilitation at BGH and building on the excellence which is already there is simply not in any of HDdUHB's plans – it is literally **NOT** an option in the Consultation's questionnaire.*

**Bronglais (marked by blue cross) is the ONLY District General Hospital in Mid Wales serving four counties.**



### **‘Treat and Transfer’ of Stroke Patients**

- HDdUHB has not provided any evidence to show how a ‘Treat and Transfer’ Unit will work in a rural area with an ageing population and a poor transport infrastructure.
- HDdUHB has not provided any detail at all about how stroke patients from BGH would be transferred onward to Llanelli and then Haverfordwest and then taken home following treatment.
- HDdUHB has provided no real evidence as to how this proposal to transfer stroke patients over one and half hours away by road ambulance to a place some 65 or 70 miles hence will be an improvement to stroke patients, or indeed, will result in a better service than the one offered by BGH at the moment. These road ambulance journeys would take place on mainly rural roads (no dual carriageways), where road closures, diversions and accidents are a regular feature, particularly during the summer tourist season.
- It isn’t known whether an already over-stretched Welsh Ambulance Service will be fully charged with this task. PBS can only assume that the Board will implement these plans without finalising these crucial details.

At an online meeting on Monday evening (16.06.25) held by HDdUHB for members of the public to understand the proposals, in response to the question of: ***Will more ambulances be provided?***

The representative from the Welsh Ambulance Service stated:

*‘So all I can probably say to answer that question at the moment is whilst there has been lots of data generated to have an understanding on the impact of some of the options, until we know the final option that’s been decided and determined by the Health Board Executive Team, we are not in a position to say what, or if, the Ambulance Service will need any additional resources and be able to comply with the option that’s chosen.’*



- This position was echoed by Health Board officials attending the PBS public meeting at Aberystwyth Arts Centre on 20/06/25, (when the Consultation was already underway), who couldn't offer any significant detail on the transfer element of these proposals.
- It isn't known whether a specialist medical escort will accompany stroke patients on these journeys (as is standard for critical care transfers) or indeed whether the Health Board has sufficient staff in place to do this.
- No consideration is given in any of this to stroke patients who will be taken to Bronglais from across the Mid Wales area: from Southern Meirionnydd, Western and Central Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire.

Successful rehabilitation for stroke patients is largely dependent on the care and motivational support of loved ones. **These proposals mean a round trip of 200 miles for many patients and visitors.**

- There are **no** direct public transport links between Aberystwyth and either of these towns and visiting even occasionally will be very costly for those without access to their own transport. (a return bus trip between Aberystwyth and Llanelli would take nine hours, leaving hardly any time to visit patients).
- Visiting daily or at least on a regular basis, will be nigh on impossible for those without the resources to do so.
- NHS clinicians (current and retired) have described the plan as unsafe, unworkable and against clinical evidence for best practice, yet their concerns have, for the most part, been ignored. According to the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP), BGH's Stroke Unit is the best performing of all of the stroke units in the HDdUHB area. If the Stroke Unit at BGH scores top marks, then why shouldn't funds be used to improve it further?

**Palliative Care for Stroke Patients:** it is a fact that one in seven stroke patients will die in hospital.

- Palliative care for such patients should be delivered by a stroke-experienced team.
- Under the proposals, patients with end-of-life issues might be sent hours away from family to die, or they could receive end-of-life care in a non-stroke unit which is outside guidance.
- Similarly, those stroke patients who deteriorate in either Llanelli or Withybush will die hours away from family.
- Identifying those who will die is very difficult and will lead to someone being thought of as 'likely to die' but surviving and then being in 'the wrong place'.



**Stroke Mimics:** are conditions that mimic stroke symptoms but are not caused by vascular issues. Common mimics include: seizures, migraines, psychiatric disorders, brain tumours, metabolic conditions like hypoglycemia and functional neurological disorders. ‘Stroke Mimics’ or the plans for dealing with them are not mentioned by the Health Board in these proposals.

- Under these proposals it’s probable that patients presenting at BGH with ‘stroke mimics’ will be taken onwards to Llanelli or Withybush. They would then eventually need to be re-routed to an A&E Unit elsewhere delaying their time to access the appropriate treatment.

#### **Post Stroke Medical Emergency:**

- If a patient presenting at BGH with stroke symptoms is then moved onwards to either Llanelli or Withybush and suffers a post stroke medical emergency such as a heart attack, ischaemic bowel or undiagnosed diabetes, under these proposals, they would experience a delay in accessing appropriate treatment.
- Post stroke medical emergencies or the plans for dealing with them are not mentioned by the Health Board in these proposals.

#### **Rehabilitation of Stroke Patients:**

- Family and friends play a huge part in the rehabilitation of stroke patients from motivating them and offering encouragement to helping them to bathe and dress, mobilise and improve cognitive skills. In many instances they will be shown by health professionals how to help a stroke patient move from a bed to a chair or how to get to the toilet safely. Their support is essential and they are often the link between getting patients out of hospital and safely back home following treatment. Both Llanelli and Withybush are too far away to allow regular visiting. It is likely that those who do not have access to their own transport or who cannot afford taxis will simply be unable to visit their loved ones.
- HDdHUB has said that it will provide digital tablets for stroke patients undergoing rehab at either Llanelli or Withybush so that they can communicate with loved ones. Many stroke patients suffer a loss of cognitive and motor skills – this idea has clearly not been thought through.
- The Health Board has not stated if they will be providing ipads for family and friends as well so that they can stay in touch.
- In many areas of Mid Wales there is still a wi-fi deficit.
- If family and friends are unable to visit their loved ones in hospital, HDdUHB has failed to address how there would be any effective liaison when it comes to discharging stroke patients following their stay in hospital. There is no mention in the plans of how this would work.



## **Equality:**

At the HDdUHB Meeting of the 29/05/25, there was much discussion about: 'Kindness and the importance of community and equality.'

- It is PBS' opinion that these plans regarding changes to stroke services are certainly not kind and they are not fit for purpose for our communities in Mid Wales. The people of Mid Wales along with everyone else in Wales have a moral, ethical and legal right to a health service which treats everyone equitably. HDdUHB's proposals regarding changes to the Stroke Units within their area do not do this.
- In terms of the effects of these proposals on BGH and healthcare in Mid Wales and how would this affect patient pathways and staff recruitment, there has been no proper impact assessment carried out by HDdUHB on the effects of removing the Stroke Unit rehabilitation from BGH.

**There is overwhelming public and political support for retaining the Stroke Unit at BGH as it is and further improving it:**

**Both Powys County Council (06/03/25) and Ceredigion County Councils (12/06/25) have passed motions of support** to this effect as have a number of Community Councils in Mid Wales **including Aberystwyth Town Council.**

At the **public meeting** held at Aberystwyth Arts Centre's Great Hall by Protect Bronglais Services on 20/06/25, **438** people voted in support of the following motion:

**'We believe that the stroke unit at Bronglais Hospital should be invested in and improved and should retain full stroke services for patients to include rehabilitation.'**

**'Rydym yn credu y dylid buddsoddi yn yr uned strôc yn Ysbyty Bronglais a'i gwella a dylai gadw gwasanaethau strôc llawn i gleifion gan gynnwys adsefydlu.'**

Currently, over **17,000** people have signed the Senedd Petition: 'Protect full stroke services at BGH; prevent downgrade to Treat and Transfer.'

These signatures represent communities demanding evidence-based healthcare plans that fully recognise the geographic challenges faced by the communities of Mid Wales. The geography cannot be changed; healthcare planning must adapt to it – not ignore it.

***Investing in BGH Stroke Unit and improving it is the solution to service provision, not removing services.***



### **The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care's reference to the involvement of Llais:**

- Llais state they are an independent body who listen to the people of Wales – a body accountable to the people of Wales. They state they want effective engagement with partnership organisations and recognise the importance of building on this locally.
- At the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee meeting of 25/06/25 when Llais gave evidence, the SM for Dwyfor Meirionnydd raised the issue of consultation in respect of proposed changes to the Stroke Unit at BGH, (which affects many of his constituents who are served by BGH). In their response, Llais said that they were: '*... taking time to listen and to hold a mirror up*', to review and respond to the proposals.
- On 26/06/25, PBS wrote to Llais to raise concerns regarding the flawed nature of the HDdUHB Consultation. Disappointingly, despite meeting with one of their officers on the 30<sup>th</sup> June for further discussion, no formal response in writing regarding our concerns has ever been received from them.

### **Conclusion:**

- These proposals from the HDdUHB Consultation which closed on the 31/08/25 lacked sufficient evidence-based detail to enable actual and potential service users within Mid Wales to make an informed choice. The accompanying questionnaire offered only two possible future scenarios for stroke services in Hywel Dda with no option to select neither of the two proposals.
- PBS asked HDdUHB to withdraw its proposal with respect to the Stroke Unit at BGH. They need to go back to the drawing board and run a truly consultative process in which they engage meaningfully with patients, staff and other stakeholders in order to arrive at more acceptable and sustainable proposals for the future of stroke services in Mid Wales.

We apologise for the length of this letter but feel sure you will appreciate that there is a lot of important information herein for you to read. Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

**Bryony Davies (Lead Petitioner and Member of PBS)**  
**Lisa Francis (Secunder of Petition and Chair of PBS)**



**Protect Bronglais Services (PBS)** is a community group of over 2,200 members formed in November 2024 to focus on matters of concern relating to Bronglais General Hospital Aberystwyth which serves the communities of Ceredigion and wider Mid Wales.

**Role:**

- Raise awareness Listen to patients' stories, experiences and those of friends and families
- Provide a listening ear to our often pressured and hard-working NHS hospital staff
- Protect what we have
- Be a critical friend
- Encourage improvements to what we have
- Encourage more people to take part in health board consultations

**Facebook:** Protect Bronglais Services **Website:** [www.protectbronglais.com](http://www.protectbronglais.com)

**email:** [protectbronglais@gmail.com](mailto:protectbronglais@gmail.com)

**Chair:** Lisa Francis

# Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** RS25/11930-13

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1543

**Petition title:** Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit

**Text of petition:** The minor injuries unit has been funded for a trial period this is ending and the service takes pressure off the A+E units in west Wales which have the worst waiting times in Wales.

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

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



## 1. Background

The Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) website states that the temporary weekend opening hours at the same day urgent care service at Cardigan Integrated Care Centre ended on Sunday 31 March 2025.

This was due to the Welsh Government's 50-day funding, which enabled the service to operate on Saturdays and Sundays since 11 January 2025, coming to an end.

It is reported that during the first seven weekends, the service saw 845 patients, around 75% of whom otherwise would have attended an emergency department. The seven-day working model also facilitated the trial of a Digital Ward model of care. Over two months, 63 patients were 'virtually admitted' and received care closer to home.

An assessment was said to be underway in March 2025 to understand the impact of operating the services across weekends.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to the Committee on 8 September 2025 states that as part of the national Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care programme, Hywel Dda UHB has received £12m over the past four years to support delivery of urgent and emergency care improvements. The programme supports the same day urgent care service model at Cardigan Integrated Care Centre and has provided initial funding to support the trial of the seven-day model.

The Cabinet Secretary is of the understanding that Hywel Dda UHB is now developing a business case, however the opening hours and management of the Cardigan Integrated Care Centre is a matter for the health board itself.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1543  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/02063/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions committee  
[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

08 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about **Petition P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit.**

I recognise the strength of feeling people have about their local NHS services.

Responsibility for planning and delivering local healthcare services rests with individual health boards. I have been very clear that I expect Hywel Dda University Health Board to provide safe and sustainable services for its population. It is best placed to assess and respond to the specific needs of its communities.

My role is to set the policy and strategic direction of the NHS in Wales.

As part of the national Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care programme, Hywel Dda University Health Board has received £12m over the past four years to support delivery of urgent and emergency care improvements. The programme supports the same day urgent care service model at Cardigan Integrated Health Centre and has provided initial funding to support the trial of a seven-day model.

I understand the health board is now developing a business case, however the opening hours and management of the Cardigan Integrated Health Centre is a matter for the health board.

Yours sincerely,

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales)

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

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

# P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 October 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 Hydref 2025

**Reference:** SR25/11930

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1544

**Petition title:** Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital

**Text of petition:** The reduction/closure of services at other Hywel Dda hospitals has caused a crisis at Glangwili.

Patients are having to travel huge distances to reach emergency care, increasing reliance on ambulances.

The CDU is no longer functional as a true Clinical Decisions Unit and is operating as a ward, with unwell patients being forced to sleep in chairs in the CDU or remain in A&E as there is no ward space to admit them.

The NHS staff are doing their best but the situation is untenable.



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

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

## 1. Background

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB) is responsible for planning and delivering healthcare services in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. It has four main hospitals:

- Bronglais Hospital in Aberystwyth
- Glangwili Hospital in Carmarthen
- Prince Philip Hospital in Llanelli
- Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest

Service reductions at some of these hospitals has meant that some patients have been required to travel to Glangwili for treatment when they would previously have been treated elsewhere.

In November 2023, HDdUHB made the decision to permanently close the Paediatric Ambulatory Care Unit (PACU) at Withybush, meaning that children who would previously have been admitted to Withybush must now be taken to Glangwili. The decision followed what was initially announced as a temporary measure in 2021. In September 2024, children requiring more than 36-hours of hospital-based care also began to be transferred from Bronglais to Glangwili due to a shortage of children's nurses, though these services have since resumed at Bronglais.

In November 2024, the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Prince Phillip was reduced from a 24-hour service to a daytime only service due to staffing shortages and patient safety concerns. Initially intended as a temporary measure for six months, the unit continues to operate with reduced hours. As the hospital does not have its own A&E department, HDdUHB has urged patients in need of urgent treatment to go to the nearest A&E at Glangwili or Morryston Hospital in Swansea. HDdUHB is currently reviewing responses to a public consultation on the MIU's future.

HDdUHB is also reviewing responses to a [public consultation](#) on its Clinical Services Plan, which would result in some services being centralised at fewer hospitals. It has argued these changes are necessary as clinical teams are too widely dispersed across multiple sites, leading to an over-dependence on a limited number of staff.

Among the [options](#) under consideration are to close Intensive Care Units (ICUs) at Withybush and/or Prince Philip, with patients requiring specialist care stabilised locally before being transferred to Glangwili. In May 2025 it was [reported](#) that ICU staff from Prince Philip were already being redeployed before the consultation had concluded, and patients needing specialist care were being transferred to Glangwili by the [Adult Critical Care Transfer Service \(ACCTS\)](#).

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government response to this petition emphasises that responsibility for planning and delivering healthcare services lies with Local Health Boards. It acknowledges there have been a number of changes made by HDdUHB, including a reduced service at the MIU at Prince Philip, but states these are matters for HDdUHB.

The response highlights the [Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care National Programme](#), which has provided £12 million to HDdUHB over the last four years to improve urgent and emergency care. This has included support for the Same Day Urgent Care (SDUC) service at the Cardigan Integrated Health Centre, including the [trial of a seven-day service](#) to help ease pressure on hospital emergency departments. The SDUC [returned to a five-day service](#) in April 2025, though HDdUHB is currently assessing the potential impact of returning to a seven-day service.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

The overnight closure of the MIU at Prince Philip has been raised by several Members of the Senedd in questions to the First Minister and to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

For example, on [1 October 2024](#) Lee Waters MS asked the First Minister whether she would call on HDdUHB to “think again” about the change. In response, the First Minister emphasised the importance of HDdUHB listening to the community and addressing staffing issues, but that there also needed to be a practical and realistic approach given the challenges.

The overnight closure of the MIU was also the subject of a [petition](#) first considered by the Petitions Committee at a meeting on [3 February 2025](#). The petition was kept open for six months to await the outcome of monitoring by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and HDdUHB.

Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary relating to the petition was received by the Committee on [29 April 2025](#). It noted the ongoing public consultation and that HDdUHB had indicated the closure had not significantly affected emergency departments elsewhere.

On [12 May 2025](#), the Committee agreed to keep the petition open pending the consultation's outcome.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1544  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/02067/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions committee

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

08 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about **Petition P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital.**

I recognise the strength of feeling people have about their local NHS services.

The responsibility for planning and delivering healthcare and NHS services rests with individual health boards.

I have been very clear that I expect Hywel Dda University Health Board to provide safe and sustainable services, which meet the needs of its population. It is best placed to assess and respond to the specific needs of its communities.

My role is to set the policy and strategic direction of the NHS in Wales.

There have been a number of changes in service provision across Hywel Dda University Health Board, including the temporary reduction in opening hours of the minor injury unit in Prince Philip Hospital, in Llanelli and the same day urgent care service in the Cardigan Integrated Health Centre. The temporary reduction in opening hours in Llanelli was based on patient safety concerns resulting from service sustainability issues. The health board is currently consulting on the future operating model of the minor injury unit in Llanelli.

As part of the National Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care, the health board has received £12m over the past four years to support delivery of urgent and emergency care improvements. The Six Goals programme supports the same day urgent care service at Cardigan Integrated Health Centre and has provided funding to support the trial of a seven-day service model. I understand the health board is now developing a business case.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales)

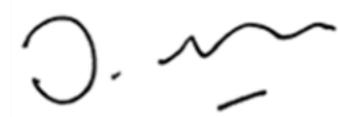
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

The opening hours and management of the Cardigan Integrated Health Centre and minor injury unit in Llanelli are matters for the health board.

The health board is currently consulting on its clinical services plan, which includes services such as critical care and stroke. Further information on the consultation can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

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

[Note: This public version has been redacted to remove personal patient data, primarily that of the petitioner].

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

Dear Carolyn

Many thanks for progressing the petition "Petition P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital".

I am grateful that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care has been approached and has provided a response. I understand from his letter that his position is that the Health Boards are responsible for their own performance, however I would respectfully ask what the role of the elected members is, if not to act when members of the public repeatedly reach out to inform them that this approach is ineffective?

When reaching out to the communities across West Wales to share this petition I was informed by many of a feeling of "what's the point" in signing a petition that will "just be ignored". People cited a multitude of petitions (some with very significant signatory numbers) that have been submitted to Welsh Government Ministers about the dire situations in Hywel Dda UHB area and that have met with extremely muted responses at best, and in most cases no action at all.

Campaigns to preserve vital services at Bronglais, Wityhush and Prince Phillip have had active involvement with the Health Boards, and with elected members but with very limited and muted action to evidence that these voices are being listened to in decision-making as services continue to be reduced or withdrawn, putting further pressure on the already beleaguered Glangwili Hospital.

Since setting up the petition I have been approached by staff at Glangwili who say that the situation there is worsening. And in August this year a visit to A&E revealed that they continue to lose staff who are demoralised and disheartened by the policy structures within which they are expected to work. Staff themselves told me that they were sharing the petition between themselves to support the request for urgent help to address the concerning issues that persist.

As you can imagine my motivation for setting up this petition was based on my own very troubling experiences, however as I have mentioned in the process of setting up and sharing this petition I have been approached by many people, a significant number further afield who have had equally troubling experiences in other Health Board areas across Wales. This appears therefore not isolated to one Health Board area.

It's not just limited to our West Wales Hospitals, our local GP practice has the word "incompetent" cleaned off but still clearly visible as someone has spray painted on the side of the practice. A Healthcare worker linked to the practice told me that they felt unable to do their job as effectively as they wanted because of limitations caused by the need as directed by Welsh Government to collect health data from patients which took up appointment time and got in the way of focusing on patient needs.

Feelings here clearly run high, and people have sadly turned to less palatable methods of trying desperately to get the attention of someone, anyone, to please listen and act. I believe this is because people are scared. Terrified at what will happen to us when we try to reach

out for support only to find that it cannot bear our weight.

To those one step removed this possibly feels like people asking for something unreasonable, but to those of us who live in the rural parts of Wales where services are being withdrawn or restricted it feels like our lives are at risk and there is no safety net. There are no other options for us here as we don't live in cities that have a selection of private medical facilities as a back-up.

My own experience is that Glangwili has suffered a significant decline in recent years: unfortunately a family member needed treatment during the pandemic, however they were quickly triaged and admitted to a ward where they were intensively treated for a number of days. The same family member experienced a recurrence of the condition in early 2024 and the experience this time was desperate!

The A&E Department had no beds available to them within the hospital, with the Clinical Decisions Unit being used as a make-shift ward and therefore being unable to function correctly as a CDU. Staff within the CDU had been advised to leave patients in chairs due to this area "not being a ward". This meant that very unwell patients were seated in chairs for 24 hours a day. Some very kind staff were in the habit of visiting the Theatres at the end of each day to seek trolleys for patients to have an opportunity to lay flat overnight, and they would return these trolleys each morning. When I raised this situation with the staff they urged me to complain and said that they agreed that the situation was not right and that patients should be admitted to appropriate wards to receive the correct treatment and care for their needs.

When I raised my concerns with a Ward Manager they advised that the solution that the Health Board was pursuing was to buy better chairs! This felt a clear example of a situation that was not able to be corrected by those within the Health Board. Presumably Health Board Management have the understanding of the role of the CDU and the need to improve the ward move-on to free up space in the CDU and the knock on that this has for patient care in A&E, so one can only assume that this solution was developed because of lack of funding or resources to make the real improvements necessary to actually change the situation for patients.

Surely this is not the state of our Wales NHS? The public service above all others that Wales' heritage suggests that we should be the flagship for.

As you can tell I have been spoken to by a great many people over the months since starting this petition and the vast majority say that their interactions with frontline staff has been exemplary and that they have nothing but great respect for those who continue to try to provide medical care in the face of such adversity. Though many have no faith in any of the structures above those frontline staff to make any meaningful and genuine improvement to the situation.

As those who are elected to oversee the wellbeing of the people of Wales, if Welsh Government Ministers won't step in to ensure that the policies and financing of the resources are correct and create the right environment to resolve the current crises across Hywel Dda and other Health Boards in Wales, then, respectfully: what is it that our Ministers are for?

I hope that the contents of this letter, whilst at times provocative, demonstrate to you the depth of feeling and need for Ministers' intervention in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Christine Castle

Document is Restricted

# P-06-1514 Welsh Government should commission a Wales-wide inquiry into sexual exploitation by grooming gangs

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** RS25/11930-1

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** [P-06-1514](#)

**Petition title:** Welsh Government should commission a Wales-wide inquiry into sexual exploitation by grooming gangs.

**Text of petition:** I was the victim of sexual exploitation by grooming gangs. I know that this practice is more prevalent than the authorities acknowledged. I believe the Welsh Government should undertake an inquiry to see how widespread the problem is and to support victims in Wales

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



# 1. Background

In summary, in June 2025, the UK Government said it will establish an ‘Independent Commission on Grooming Gangs’ and that it will have statutory powers to direct targeted investigations in local areas. The terms of reference are yet to be set.

In response to this petition, Welsh Government says that an England and Wales inquiry is “the optimum choice” and it would be “counterproductive” to establish a separate national inquiry in Wales. It says:

*The First Minister has already written to the Home Secretary requesting assurance that investigations in Wales will be included in the national inquiry. It was always our intention to revisit the suggestion of a national inquiry as discussed in the Senedd in March.*

Previously, in 2022 the UK wide Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published a report on Child sexual exploitation by organised networks Investigation Report, which included Swansea as one of six case studies.

## 1.1. UK Government’s England and Wales audit

Baroness Casey’s National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse was commissioned by the UK Government in January 2025 in response to concerns arising from high profile court cases relating to group-based child sexual exploitation.

Its terms of reference included “group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse based in England and Wales” and referred to:

*[...] the historic and ongoing crimes of group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation, of the kind that have taken place in Rochdale, Rotherham, Telford, Walsall, Oldham and Oxfordshire.*

Welsh Government’s response to this petition refers to the audit and says it “provided information to the audit team that was requested”. In addition to England and Wales data, the audit report into child sexual exploitation and abuse states it drew on the following Wales-wide specific data:

- Number of children reported during the year where child exploitation was a factor by local authority

- Children placed on the child protection register during the year, by local authority, category of abuse and age

The audit report says:

*Data from Wales shows that child sexual exploitation remains the most frequent form of exploitation identified by Children's Services in Wales [...]but that the coincidence of both criminal and sexual exploitation was significant.*

It notes this level of data is available in Wales only and that a different type of child exploitation data is published in England.

### **No conclusion on the scale of exploitation**

On the question of the scale of exploitation in England and Wales, the audit concluded that:

*We were unable to provide an assessment on the scale of group-based child sexual exploitation. There is no recent study of the prevalence of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the population. Confusing and inconsistently applied definitions and incomplete data across the police, local authorities, health and the criminal justice system, obscure it. The concept of 'grooming gangs', while well-known to the public, is not captured clearly in any official data set.*

It says that the England and Wales data that was identified shows that:

*The only figure on group-based child sexual exploitation comes from a new police dataset (called the Complex and Organised Child Abuse 7 Dataset - COCAD) which, while suffering a number of limitations, has identified around 700 recorded offences of group-based child sexual exploitation in 2023.*

And goes on to say:

*Given how under-reported child sexual exploitation is, the flaws in the data collection and the confusing and inconsistently applied definitions, **it is highly unlikely that this accurately reflects the true scale of child sexual exploitation, or group-based exploitation.** It is a failure of public policy over many years that there remains such limited, reliable data in this area. [Bold is our emphasis]*

## **UK Government to establish an Independent Commission on Grooming Gangs**

One part of the audit's 12 recommendations was to call for:

*A national inquiry co-ordinating a series of targeted local investigations. This would be overseen by an Independent Commission which has full statutory inquiry powers, is time limited, targeted and proportionate to the numbers of victims.*

In its [response](#) in June 2025, the UK Government said it “will establish a national inquiry under the Inquiries Act to co-ordinate a series of targeted local investigations”. It went on to say:

- “Established under the Inquiries Act and headed by an independent chair, the Independent Commission on Grooming Gangs will have statutory powers to direct targeted investigations in local areas, with the aim of holding institutions to account for current and historic failures in their response to group-based CSE<sup>1</sup>.
- The commission will have the powers to compel local organisations to comply with its investigations, including providing information and summoning witnesses where required to get to the truth and learn lessons from the past.
- Following the appointment of the independent chair, the commission will urgently begin considering evidence and data to decide the first local areas for investigation. This will be based on information provided by the police, inspectorates, or through referrals from local agencies, victims and survivors, and members of the public. We will now work at pace to appoint a chair and agree a Terms of Reference.
- The Commission will be time-limited. The exact length of time will be determined by the terms of reference.”

However whilst the Centre for Women's Justice [welcomed the Home Secretary's pledge](#) it said:

*This is not, however, the first time that a statutory inquiry has been tasked with investigating how institutions respond to group-based grooming and sexual exploitation of children. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('IICSA'), which ran*

---

<sup>1</sup> Child Sexual Exploitation

*for seven years, included a strand of inquiry focused on child sexual exploitation by organised networks.*

It also said that the majority of IICSA's recommendations were never implemented.

## **1.2. Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)**

Baroness Casey's 2025 audit refers to the UK wide [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#) and says

*[...] we want to acknowledge the importance of the recommendations made by the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in their final report to improve how child sexual abuse as a whole, should be tackled. Our recommendations are therefore made on the basis that their proposals for change are being implemented.*

IICSA included a specific report on [Child sexual exploitation by organised networks Investigation Report](#), including [Swansea](#) as one of six case studies.

The overall final UK wide [IICSA report](#) was published in October 2022 and its recommendations included 6 directly to the Welsh Government. In its [final response in April 2023](#) Welsh Government fully accepted 4 recommendations and accepted 2 'in principle'.

## **2. Senedd scrutiny**

### **2.1. In Plenary**

There have been a range of questions and debates in Plenary about 'grooming gangs' some of which have included references to the petitioner specifically:

- [14 January 2025](#): Question from Darren Millar to the First Minister:

*[...]do you agree with the growing chorus of voices, including the Labour MP for Rochdale, the Labour MP for Rotherham and the Labour mayor of Greater Manchester, that we need a new UK-wide inquiry into child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs?*

- [30 January 2025](#): Written response to a question from Darren Millar:

*What representation has the Welsh Government made to the UK Government about the need for a UK-wide inquiry into child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs in light of the growing chorus of voices from political figures, victims and the Welsh public?*

- 12 February 2025: Welsh Conservatives debate proposing that the Senedd:

*Calls on the Welsh Government to commission an independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs.*

- 17 June 2025: Question from Darren Millar to the First Minister:

*[...]Do you regret rejecting the calls of victims and survivors for an inquiry last January? Do you accept that the delay has caused further harm and hurt? And will you now give a full public commitment that the Welsh Government will back that UK inquiry and instruct all public bodies under your control here in Wales to co-operate fully with it, because victims and their families deserve nothing less?*

## **2.2. Senedd Committees**

### **Children on the Margins**

The Children, Young People and Education Committee's (CYPE) Children on the margins report focused on two main groups of children and young people, those who go missing, and those who are victims of criminal exploitation. Its remit included examining the:

- Nature and scale;
- At risk groups; and
- Policy and practice in the context of devolved and UK powers.

The Committee called for evidence from stakeholders and heard from St Giles Trust about the risk factors for vulnerability to grooming:

*Children who are homeless and/or in temporary accommodation are, in our experience, particularly likely to be exposed to the risk of exploitation and to be groomed by gangs.*

The Committee's report made 23 recommendations of which the [Welsh Government accepted 15](#), accepted in principle 6 and rejected 2. None of the recommendations referred to 'grooming gangs' specifically.

### **Care Experienced Children**

Baroness Casey's [National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) found that children in care are disproportionately represented as victims of grooming gangs.

The final IICSA report also referred to the risk factors of children in care being vulnerable to sexual exploitation when they are housed by local authorities in unregulated placements. Unregulated placements refer to accommodation for a child or young person that does not provide them with 'care', for example B&Bs, Airbnb's, and hostels.

The CYPE Committee report, [Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform](#), heard that the use of unregulated placements was making it increasingly challenging to keep children safe where they live. One of the Committee's recommendations was that Welsh Government should carry out and publish an analysis of the use of unregulated accommodation across Wales for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 21.

Issues related to unregulated placements were also covered in the scrutiny of what was then the [Health and Social Care Bill](#).

### **House of Commons petitions**

Although dated 2021, this House of Commons [debate pack on petitions relating to grooming gangs](#) provides some historical context.

## **3. Welsh Government action**

This petition related to both devolved and non devolved matters. Welsh Government has the powers over health and social services but not over most aspects of criminal justice or policing.

There have been calls for [grooming to be criminalised in Wales](#) but [Paragraph 4](#) of Schedule 7B to the Government of Wales Act 2006 is clear that the Senedd cannot create or modify any sexual offences. Therefore, the Senedd does not have the powers to create an offence of grooming with intent to commit a sexual offence.

Welsh Government has a range of guidance relevant to the issues raised in the petition, including, but not limited to:

- [Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation](#)
- [Safeguarding children from Child Criminal Exploitation](#)
- [Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care](#)

Welsh Government is currently consulting on a new [National strategy for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse](#) after its three year [national action plan](#) came to an end.

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1514  
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00444/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

18 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

I am writing in response to the letter you wrote to the First Minister on 4 July in respect of a petition (Petition P-06-1514) you will be considering from Emily Vaughn, requesting an inquiry into group-based exploitation in Wales. This has been passed to me to respond to as safeguarding sits within my portfolio.

In January, the Prime Minister commissioned Baroness Casey to undertake an audit of group-based exploitation across England and Wales. The report detailing the outcomes of this audit was published on 16 June. Welsh Government provided information to the audit team that was requested.

Baroness Casey has recommended that a national inquiry be established that will encompass England and Wales which has been accepted by the Prime Minister. The First Minister has already written to the Home Secretary requesting assurance that investigations in Wales will be included in the national inquiry. It was always our intention to revisit the suggestion of a national inquiry as discussed in the Senedd in March.

Baroness Casey's report provides a 'state of the nation' position on group-based exploitation that will be the foundation for the national inquiry that is being established.

Undertaking this across England and Wales, instead of separately, is the optimum choice given that policing and criminal justice are reserved to the UK Government. We need to ensure the whole system is reviewed as part of any inquiry and that it acknowledges both reserved matters and devolved areas such as education, social services and health.

Additionally, this will ensure that any cross-border group-based exploitation and trafficking for sexual exploitation is identified. This is an issue that has been raised by Ms Vaughn previously.

We believe it would be counterproductive to establish a national inquiry in Wales that is separate from the inquiry in England. This would increase the risk of us not being able to fully understand cross-border issues, not being party to important changes in policing and

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@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.

criminal justice and could delay the prompt identification of learning to ensure any improvements are made at pace.

We will fully engage with the UK Government national inquiry that is being established. Welsh Government will specifically focus on what this means for Wales.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol

Minister for Children and Social Care

# Mental health support for children under 10

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** RS25/11930-6

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1518

**Petition title:** Provide more timely and accessible mental health support for children under 10, including by referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

**Text of petition:**

“No further support available”

A term many parents of children with mental health problems under the age of 10 will have heard multiple times when trying to get help for their children.

A term I have heard many times, as the only support available to children is parents doing workshops, and parental wellbeing groups. What is there for the children themselves? Nothing.

I have a 5 year old son who has lived with anxiety since he was 2. It has made him unable to attend pre-school, nursery and more recently school, he has been referred to multiple agencies, he is under a community paediatrician, but even so, still no support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



This has left both me and him with nowhere to turn, no plan to help him, no support at all.

I'm writing this petition as the government need to rethink the children's mental health services in Wales. They need to make sure better early intervention is available for younger children. They shouldn't have to suffer for years until they hit breaking point at 10/11 years old before they can get all the help they need. They shouldn't have to miss out on education and socialisation. Parents shouldn't have to see their children suffer the way they are for years, fighting a broken system to make sure their children are heard.

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

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

# 1. Background

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Wales provide a mix of primary and secondary care specialist NHS services for children and young people with mental health problems as defined by the [Mental Health \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#). The service offers assessment and treatment when children and young people have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties as well as promoting emotional wellbeing and preventative mental health services and treatment to children and young people.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The letter from the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing to the Committee on 27 August 2025 sets out the action the Welsh Government is taking in relation to supporting children and young people with their mental health, including:

- The all-age [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035](#).
- The [NYTH/NEST framework](#) for mental health and wellbeing for babies, children and young people.
- The [Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care \(ECPLC\)](#) approach, supported by a number of early years policies and programmes, including Families First, and Flying Start.
- The [Healthy Child Wales Programme](#) and the [Healthy Child Wales Programme for school aged children](#).
- The [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing](#), published in March 2021.
- Funding to support implementation of the Whole School Approach framework and programme of work through schools, local authorities, and other education settings.
- Funding to support delivery of universal and targeted well-being interventions, staff training, and provision of school and community-based counselling.

School and community-based counselling is a statutory duty on all local authorities in Wales to support children and young people in schools from Year 6. However, the letter states that Welsh Government funding

is giving authorities the ability to **voluntarily extend this support to below Year 6**.

- The health and well-being area of learning and experience of the new Curriculum for Wales, which is mandatory for all learners.

Further details on the above are provided in the Minister's letter.

There is also a [CAMHS In-Reach to Schools service](#), launched in 2021. The service aims to build capacity in schools to better support the mental health and wellbeing needs of children, young people and staff.

### **Joint inspectorate review**

A joint inspectorate review, led by Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) alongside Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn, took an in-depth look at how healthcare, education, and children's services are working to meet the mental health needs of children and young people across Wales. [The report was published in November 2024.](#)

The Minister's letter states that the review shows the progress the Welsh Government has made to reduce waiting times and positive developments in schools to support young people, and single points of access for CAMHS. However, it also identified areas where further work is required and the Welsh Government is said to have taken this on board.

The letter goes on to say that the Welsh Government has developed a CAMHS service specification to reduce variation across Wales. This includes an **expectation that CAMHS can accept referrals from the age of five**. Health boards are said to have undertaken baseline assessments against the specification and are working towards implementation. The Welsh Government will be providing annual updates on this work.

## **3. Welsh Parliament action**

### **Children, Young People and Education Committee**

The Fifth Senedd's [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) undertook a detailed inquiry on improving the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Wales between July 2017 and September 2018. Its '[Mind over Matter](#)' report was published in April 2018.

Following the publication of the Mind Over Matter report, the Committee kept a close eye on the implementation of the report's recommendations and published the Mind over Matter: Two years on follow-up report in October 2020.

### **Welsh Youth Parliament**

The Second Welsh Youth Parliament's Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee published its report, Young minds matter, in November 2022.

### **Health and Social Care Committee**

The Sixth Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee held an inquiry into mental health inequalities and published its report in December 2022.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1518  
Ein cyf/Our ref SM/00415/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair

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

27 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1518: Provide more timely and accessible mental health support for children under 10, including by referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for the Welsh Government, demonstrated through the appointment of a dedicated Minister for Children and Social Care, and myself as Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has been very clear in her commitment that good mental health is the platform on which our education system will be built.

We recognise the importance of supporting children and young people with their mental health - our all-age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy reflects this: [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES](#). It sets out our priorities for the next 10 years with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention, delivered through a joint approach from health and social care.

We know that early childhood experiences, whether positive or negative, can have significant impact on children's current, and future, mental health and wellbeing. The Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) approach focuses on the child and their development. This builds on and recognises the importance of working together with parents, and other care givers, to support every baby and young child to feel empowered, cared for, nurtured and to create environments in which children are able to thrive. It also builds on the nurturing and learning parents/carers provide at home and/or helps as a preventative measure for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The approach is supported by a number of early years policies and programmes, including Families First, and Flying Start, which promote the development of multi-agency systems of support for families and places an emphasis on early help and prevention.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Sarah.Murphy@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Sarah.Murphy@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales)

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

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

The Healthy Child Wales Programme [Healthy Child Wales Programme | GOV.WALES](#) supports all families in Wales by providing a universal health offer for all children. It is delivered primarily by health visiting services for children under five and sets out the planned contacts children, and their families can expect from their health boards, from maternity service handover to the first years of schooling.

These universal contacts cover three areas of intervention: screening; immunisation; and monitoring and supporting child development (surveillance). Health visitors play a vital role in supporting children and families at this early stage of life. They are well placed to identify any health issues early and can offer expert advice, support and interventions tailored to meet the individual family's needs.

Building upon the Healthy Child Wales Programme is the Healthy Child Wales Programme for school aged children, [Healthy Child Wales Programme: for school aged children | GOV.WALES](#) which is a new unified operating model for school nursing services. It provides a structured and equitable national programme of planned universal health contacts for all compulsory school aged children and young people (aged 5 to 16 years) in Wales, regardless of setting. It will ensure that children and young people can receive the universal benefits of a public health programme, which prioritises prevention and ensures children and young people are supported by NHS Wales with their health and well-being, according to need, throughout school age.

Health Inspectorate Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn produced a joint review on healthcare, education and children's services supporting the mental health needs of children and young people in Wales. It showed the progress we have been making to reduce waiting times and positive developments in schools to support young people, and single points of access for CAMHS. However, it also identified areas where further work is required, and this work has been embedded into the work programme underpinning the strategy. As a result, we have developed a CAMHS service specification to reduce variation across Wales. This includes our expectation that CAMHS can accept referrals from the age of five. Health boards have undertaken baseline assessments against the specification and are working towards implementation. We will be providing annual updates on this work as part of the implementation of the strategy which will be made publicly available.

In March 2021, we published the [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing](#). This statutory guidance for schools, local authorities and others is designed to support them in assessing the well-being needs of learners, staff, and the whole school population. It also complements the curriculum's Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning Experience within the Curriculum for Wales.

In 2025-26 the Welsh Government has made available £13.6 million from its education and health budgets to support implementation of the Whole School Approach framework and programme of work through schools, local authorities, and other education settings. We have allocated £4.75m within the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) equity strand in 2025-26 to support delivery of universal and targeted well-being interventions, staff training, and provision of school and community-based counselling. School and community-based counselling is a statutory duty on all local authorities in Wales to support children and young people in schools from Year 6, however Welsh government funding is giving authorities the ability to voluntarily extend this support to below Year 6.

The health and well-being area of learning and experience of the new Curriculum for Wales, which is mandatory for all learners, provides a holistic structure for understanding health and well-being, equipping them with the capacity to navigate life's opportunities and challenges. Central to this area is a strong emphasis on physical health and mental, emotional, and social well-being. It encourages learners to explore how these elements are deeply interconnected

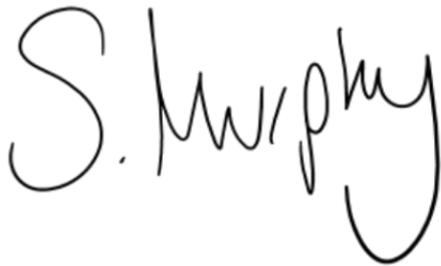
and highlights the vital role that good health and mental well-being play in supporting effective learning.

By creating opportunities for children to express their emotions and build emotional literacy, we foster a culture in the school curriculum where open conversations about mental health are normalised. This not only supports individual growth for our young learners but also helps to create a more compassionate and supportive learning environment.

We are taking a whole system approach to mental health and wellbeing support for babies, children and young people and their families. This is particularly important for under 10's whose mental health and wellbeing must be supported in a holistic way through their trusted adults and safe and supportive communities. Our [NYTH/NEST framework](#) for mental health and wellbeing for babies, children and young people provides a set of key principles and shared language for sectors to work together to create layers of support for babies and children's mental health and wellbeing support.

Regions are working to imbed the NEST framework with some excellent examples of good practice including West Glamorgan funding the charity Faith in Families to provide mental health support to children and their families to increase school attendance. Whilst West Wales fund the Early Years Intervention Team who work in partnership across health and social care with children in the early years offering one-to-one and group support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

**Sarah Murphy AS/MS**

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

# P-06-1521: Give park home residents in Wales the right to a water meter

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** SR25/11930-10

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1521

**Petition title:** Give park home residents in Wales the right to a water meter

**Text of petition:**

Residents of some park home sites in Wales are paying in excess of £60 a month in water bills, despite living in small single and double units. Currently, many site owners divide their total bill by the number of homes on the park, before passing the bill on to residents. This means there is no incentive for site owners to fix leaks, as they know residents will foot the bill regardless.

The Welsh Government could stop this injustice by giving park home residents the right to a water meter.

Additional information:

Providing park home residents with the right to have a water meter fitted so that they are only charged for their individual usage would mirror the situation for the majority of homeowners across the country.



Doing so would ensure that park home residents only pay for what they use, ending the current injustice whereby many are being charged for leaks which are not their responsibility.

It would also genuinely make maintaining pipes and repairing leaks the responsibility of the site owner (as it should be), encouraging them to carry out repairs and upgrades.

In turn, this would reduce the environmental damage which is being caused by huge amounts of water being leaked under private park home sites in Wales.

Park home residents at one site in Flintshire, North Wales, have been getting charged more than £65 a month for water by their site owner, when evidence suggests they should be paying around £16 a month. This injustice must be stopped.

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

## 1. Background

The [Water Resale Order 2006](#) sets out rules that aim to ensure people are not overcharged if they pay someone other than the water company for their water or sewerage services. This includes people who pay a Park Home site owner.

The Order is made by [Ofwat](#) (the water sector regulator), rather than UK or Welsh Ministers, under powers contained in Section 150 of the [Water Industry Act 1991](#).

[Ofwat's guidance](#) that accompanies the Order states:

*Anybody who resells water or sewerage services must charge no more than the amount they are charged by the water company. They are also allowed to charge a reasonable administration charge.*

*The administration charge is set to cover administration costs and the maintenance of meters. It can only be charged if it is not recovered by any other arrangement, such as through the rent or mobile home pitch fee. Resellers can recover around £5 each year for those without a meter and £10 for those with a*

*meter. The administration charge applies to each purchaser and not to each occupant.*

The Order sets out a number of ways the bill from the water reseller (the site owner in this instance) should be shared between the purchasers.

This includes circumstances where no purchasers are metered, all purchasers are metered, and some purchasers are metered and others are not. [Ofwat's website](#) sets out that if no purchasers are metered, the water reseller must charge for water in one of the following six ways:

- split equally between the purchasers, or in proportion to:
- the number of people in each property;
- the rateable value of each property;
- the total floor space of each property;
- the number of bedrooms in each property; or
- half the bill according to method 1 (split equally between purchasers) and the other half of the bill according to any one of methods 2-5.

If the reseller charges more than the average bill in the region, they must show that they calculated the bill using one of these methods.

The issue of water meters for park homes was [raised in the House of Commons](#) in 2023. A petition - Water meters for park homes - was debated on 17 January 2023. It requested:

*... that the House of Commons urge the Government to require all water companies to provide each residential mobile home on a protected site with water meters and ensure that they fit meters for free on request (excepting Scotland).*

In response the UK Government highlighted the Water Resale Order, and outlined other options for concerned constituents, including raising the matter with the site owner or the licensing authority (which would be the local authority).

The UK Government also noted that if there are specific concerns about leaks not being fixed by a site owner, residents could contact the water company supplying the site as it can request that significant leaks are fixed by a reseller.

Water companies have a power under [Section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991](#), to require a property owner to repair a leak in their private supply pipe or fittings, within a specified time period.

If a property owner does not repair the leak within the specified time period, the water company can, under the [Supply \(Water Fittings\) Regulations 1999](#), undertake the work itself and recover costs from the owner.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has published an [information booklet](#) on dealing with private leaks.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, has written to the Committee in relation to this petition.

The Cabinet Secretary sates “disputes about the resale of water are a private matter” and refers to the charging methods and water company powers outlined above. With respect to the latter, he says:

*If charges are high due to leakage residents have the right to ask their water company to investigate. If a leak is found the water company will serve notice on the site owner for it to be repaired. As reducing leakage from the network is a priority for water companies they will respond to anyone who reports a possible leak whether they are the property owner, or bill payer.*

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

At the time of writing this briefing Senedd Research is unable to identify this issue having been discussed previously in the Senedd, other than in relation to the petition.

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

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1521  
Our ref HIDCC/01296/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

28 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July regarding Petition P-06-1521 received from Sam Swash related to providing park home residents with the right to have a water meter fitted. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I have corresponded with Cllr Swash (who also raised the matter with the previous Minister for Climate Change in 2023). I previously confirmed that disputes about the resale of water are a private matter and I provided details of the existing legislation from Ofwat requiring resellers to apportion charges by one of the prescribed methods. The site owner is not required to install meters (it would be for them not the water company to do so). However, they do need to be apportioning charges by one of the prescribed methods and they must not make a profit on the recovery of charges.

Ofwat sets the maximum prices but it does not have powers to resolve disputes regarding the resale of water. I previously informed Cllr Swash neither CCW nor Ofwat are able to assist other than to advise on the water resale guidelines.

If charges are high due to leakage residents have the right to ask their water company to investigate. If a leak is found the water company will serve notice on the site owner for it to be repaired. As reducing leakage from the network is a priority for water companies they will respond to anyone who reports a possible leak whether they are the property owner, or bill payer.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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.

Thank you for writing to me on behalf of the Petitions Committee on this important matter. I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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

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

**Response from petitioner, Cllr Sam Swash, to Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs' correspondence via the Senedd Petitions' Committee**

The Cabinet Secretary's response restates a position that residents of mobile home sites have heard many times: that disputes about the resale of water are a "*private matter*". This position is wholly inadequate. It leaves residents exposed to excessive charges with no realistic means of redress. The purpose of this petition is to highlight why the status quo is failing and why Government action is urgently required.

**Context**

Willow Park in Mancot, Flintshire, is a mobile home site of 159 households, the majority of which are occupied by retirees on fixed incomes. For several years, residents have been charged up to £68 a month for water by the site owner – nearly double the national average.

Suspecting that the excessive charges were linked to significant leakage from the sites aged drainage infrastructure, the Residents' Association submitted multiple Environmental Regulations (EIR) requests to Welsh Water. The responses suggest that around 5 million gallons of water are being lost on the site each year due to leaks. Welsh Water has repeatedly asked the site owner to carry out repairs, with little effect.

To gather further evidence, over 40 residents of the park paid to install private water meters and collected usage data over six months. This showed the average charge should have been £16 a month. When combined with information from Welsh Water, this indicates that residents have collectively paid over £370,000 in the last five years for water they did not use.

This is not just a financial injustice. At a time when the sustainable use of water is a national priority, allowing millions of gallons to be wasted through unrepaired leaks represents serious and unnecessary environmental harm.

This evidence demonstrates both the seriousness of the problem and the inadequacy of the Government's current position.

**On the claim that this is a "*private matter*"**

To characterise the situation as merely a private dispute is reductive and effectively abdicates responsibility. It leaves residents with no remedy other than expensive legal action.

In practice, this means asking a group of pensioners to take on a large national company in court. Legal advice obtained by residents suggests that this could cost upwards of £20,000 – a sum beyond their means. To suggest that this outcome is acceptable, as the Cabinet Secretary has done, is profoundly unfair given the inequality of arms.

### **On Ofwat's 'requirements'**

The Cabinet Secretary refers to Ofwat's rules, which require resellers to apportion charges by a prescribed method and not make a profit. At Willow Park, as on many other unmetered mobile home sites, the prescribed method used is to divide the total bill equally between the number of homes on the site.

This system utterly fails to protect residents from being charged for leaks. Provided that the site owner does not make a profit, they can simply pass the cost of leaks onto residents. In fact, this arrangement perversely incentivises site owners not to invest in maintaining or upgrading water infrastructure, since the costs of leakage are recoverable from residents under these requirements.

### **On the right to ask water companies to investigate**

Residents have already exercised this right. Welsh Water has investigated, confirmed the existence of leaks, and requested that the site owners carry out repairs. Yet the leaks remain unresolved, and the excessive charges continue, as they have done for years. The Cabinet Secretary's reassurance therefore provides no meaningful remedy.

### **Conclusion**

The present system is failing residents of mobile home sites across Wales who find themselves in this invidious position. The Welsh Government's position on this matter is clearly untenable.

The Petitions Committee should press the Cabinet Secretary to take responsibility and explore meaningful solutions, whether through primary legislation or through updated model standards for mobile home sites (I am happy to provide detailed explanations on how both mechanisms could be used, as I have already done so to staff of the Committee).

Without such action, residents will remain unfairly overcharged for water they have not used, with no practical means of redress.

# P-06-1526 - Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** RS25/12212/2

## Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1526

Petition title: Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In!

Text of petition:

Grassroots sports are under threat in Caerphilly County Borough and beyond. Our local council is attempting to balance the books through above-inflation increases to pitch fees, placing an unfair burden on community clubs. This comes despite facilities like Abercarn Welfare being in a shocking state this season.

More details

Volunteers already give their time and effort to keep grassroots sports alive—why should they be expected to fill the funding gap left by our councils? If local authorities can no longer support community sport, then the Welsh Government must step in to ensure these vital clubs survive.



We call on the Welsh Government to:

-  Provide emergency funding to cover rising pitch fees
-  Develop a long-term strategy to protect community sports clubs
-  Hold councils accountable for the maintenance of sports facilities

Without action, clubs will fold, opportunities for young players will disappear, and grassroots sport will suffer. Sign this petition to demand urgent support for the future of our communities!

## 1. Background

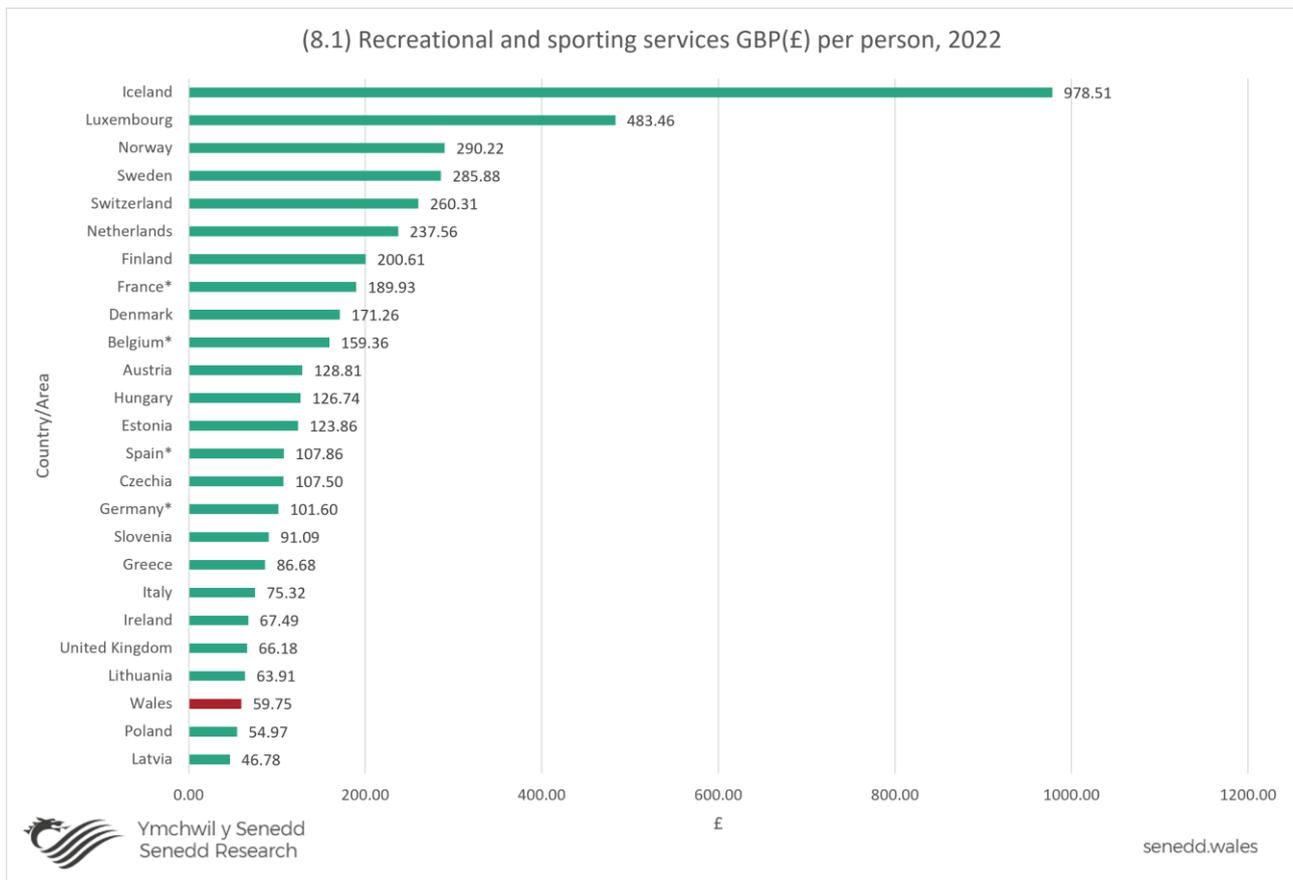
The majority of Welsh Government funding for sport is directed through Sport Wales, which this year has a total of £23.5 million revenue and £10.1 million capital funding which may be used to support grassroots sport. Sport Wales has established specific grant schemes designed to support and nurture grassroots sport, such as the Be Active Wales Fund and the Crowdfunder Scheme.

## 2. Historic funding levels of sport in Wales

Following a decade of funding reductions from the Welsh Government and local authorities, public funding of culture and sport in Wales is lower, per head, than most European nations.

[Analysis from Senedd Research](#) compared public spending on culture and sport with 24 European countries (including the UK as a whole) for which data was available.

The average spend on recreation and sporting services in these countries is £187.74 per person. In Wales the figure is £59.75 per person, or 32% of the average of these countries. This placed Wales third from bottom.



## 2.1. A decade of cuts

In total, 2024-25 saw the Welsh Government cut revenue funding for culture and sport by 7.7% compared to 2023-24 allocations. Capital funding, which is less than half the value of revenue allocations, increased by 6.3%.

This meant that, by its own calculations, the Welsh Government had cut revenue budgets in these areas by 17% in real-terms over a decade. Over the same period, capital budgets (which are still less than half the size of revenue budgets) almost tripled in size.

The 2024-25 cuts were reversed in 2025-26. This leaves revenue funding (excluding non-cash, which is nominal and not available for day-to-day spending) for culture and sport bodies largely back where it was in 2023-24 – meaning a real-terms cut.

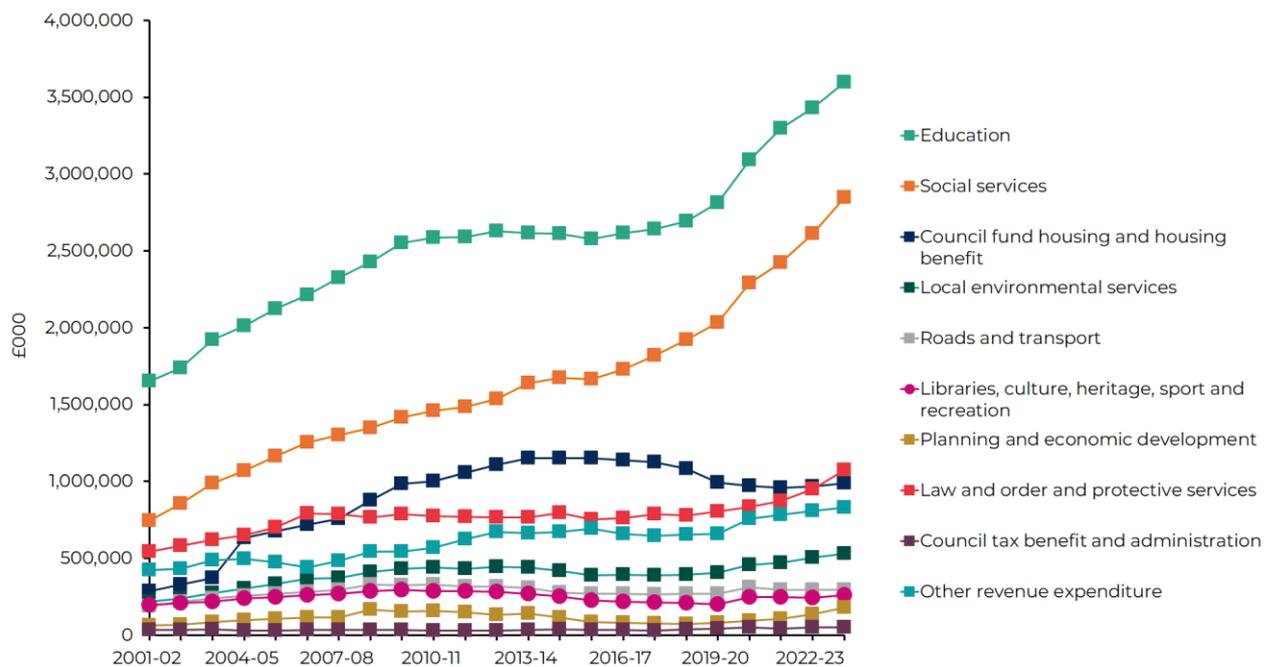
Key points:

- Sport Wales's revenue allocation (excluding non-cash) increased by 10% between the 2025-26 Revised Baseline and the 2025-26 June Supplementary Budget.

- However, Sport Wales’s revenue allocation (excluding non-cash) increased by less than 1% between 2023-24 and the 2025-26 June Supplementary Budget. This is less than inflation, which was about 4% between 2023 and 2025.
- Sport Wales’s capital allocation is £10 million in 2025-26 in the June Supplementary Budget. It was £8 million in the 2025-26 Revised Baseline.

Provision of culture, sport and recreation services is largely discretionary for local authorities. Between 2013-14 and 2023-24, local authority revenue funding of libraries, culture, heritage, sport and recreation reduced by 28% in real terms, whilst spending on education and social services soared.

### Local authority revenue outturn by service (£000s) (2001-2 to 2022-23)



Source: [Stats Wales](#)

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2024 the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee conducted an inquiry into the impact of reductions in funding for culture and sport.

It highlighted the gap in funding for these sectors between Wales and other European nations, and called for the Welsh Government to reach parity of funding

with similar countries. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation in principle, and responded with funding increases in the 2025-26 Final Budget. These increases largely reversed the 2024-25 cuts, but still mean a net reduction – once inflation is considered – in revenue spending for Sport Wales between 2023-24 and 2025-26 (see 2.1 in this briefing).

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



Ein cyf/Our ref JS/00625/25

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

15 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 19 August seeking my views on Petition P-06-1526: "Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In!".

The majority of Welsh Government funding for sport is directed through Sport Wales, which this year has a total of £23.5 million revenue and £10.1 million capital funding which may be used to support grassroots sport. Sport Wales has established specific grant schemes designed to support and nurture grassroots sport, such as the Be Active Wales Fund and the Crowdfunder Scheme, and more information on those schemes and other ways we are supporting grassroots sport can be found on the Sport Wales website.

The petition also mentions Local Authority funding. Although this is outside my portfolio responsibilities, the Welsh Government continues to prioritise frontline public services including local government as far as possible in our budget decisions. Local Authority funding for 2025-2026 in the final Welsh Government budget increased by £262m compared, on a like for like basis, to the final settlement for 2024-2025, an average increase of 4.5%.

I know that increased demand for services and cost pressures means all local authorities have had to make difficult decisions on council tax, other income sources, and the services the council provides. Decisions made on the provision of local services are for local authority elected members, within the relevant statutory requirements and following appropriate scrutiny and consultation with local communities. As part of any local decision making, local authorities are responsible for their own assessments of the provision of local services that may impact people in their area.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Jack.Sargeant@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jack.Sargeant@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jack.Sargeant@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jack.Sargeant@gov.wales)

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

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

I hope you and Committee members find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Jack Sargeant AS/MS**

Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership

Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol

**P-06-1526 Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In! -  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 22 September 2025**

Further Commentary on Petition 246573: Save Grassroots Sports – Welsh Government Must Step In

The minister's response fails to acknowledge the real-world impact of the proposed 75% increase in pitch fees on grassroots sport. Community clubs operate on tight budgets, and such a hike would inevitably be passed on to players and families — increasing household costs and risking a decline in participation. This is not hypothetical; it's already happening.

While the minister points to Sports Wales funding, this is not a reliable safety net. Our club applied for a Sports Wales Facilities Grant this year and was refused. The process lacks transparency and consistency, and many clubs are left without support. The system is arbitrary and does not reflect the urgent cost pressures we face.

Beyond pitch fees, clubs are grappling with rising energy bills, maintenance costs, staffing, and the collapse of traditional income streams from social clubs and trading arms. These financial pressures are cumulative and unsustainable. The minister's response does not address this broader context.

Grassroots sport is not a luxury — it's a vital part of community life, public health, and youth development. If local authorities cannot afford to maintain facilities without passing on unaffordable costs, then the Welsh Government must intervene. Emergency funding and a long-term strategy are essential to protect the future of community sport.

# P-06-1535 Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

Reference: SR25/11930-9

**Petition Number:** P-06-1535

**Petition title:** Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales

**Text of petition:** The practice of incorporating plastic mesh netting in grass turf has been an increasingly worrying development over the last few years. It has an awful effect on our environment, can lead to wildlife becoming caught up in the netting once it becomes exposed and is something that is simply not needed.

The plastic netting itself never actually goes away, it just breaks down into smaller and smaller microplastic particles, polluting our soil and releasing the chemicals contained in it.

Some turf producers use this plastic netting to save themselves money as they can lift the turf sooner rather than waiting for the grass root system to become fully established.

What they are actually doing is deliberately putting plastic into the soil at a time when we need to be taking urgent action to reduce our use of single use plastics.

The plastics industry is the fastest growing source of climate emissions in the world. It emits around 3.4% of world climate emissions and is forecast to rise to 19% by 2040 if we don't tackle it now. The UK Turfgrass Growers Association has recently voted to ban plastic netting in turf by its producers (which will take effect from 31st October 2026).

We call on Welsh Government to follow suit and amend housing regulations to ban the use of this turf in new housing developments in Wales.

<https://www.dlf.co.uk/news/2025/january/tga-bans-plastic-netting-in-turfgrass-production>



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

## 1. Background

Plastic mesh netting can be used when growing turf. The netting is placed when grass seed is being sown and holds the plants together, making it easier for turf to be lifted and transported. Growing turf with netting can be quicker than conventional methods because the turf can be removed before an extensive grass root network has grown.

Plastic turf netting is usually made from polypropylene or nylon, according to Turfonline. These plastics are made of many distinct chemicals. Plastics left in the environment will break down over time into microplastics that infiltrate soil, freshwater, and marine environments. These microplastics can then accumulate in living structures, potentially impacting human and environmental health. Some “chemicals of concern” in plastics can affect human nervous and hormonal systems and others are known to increase cancer risk.

The Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) is an industry body comprising around 50 organisations who collectively produce “approximately 70% of the cultivated turf grown in the British Isles”. In January 2025, it announced its members had voted 17-to-1 in favour of banning the use of plastic netting in turf production from October 2026. Its press release addressed the current lack of suitable alternatives to plastic netting in turf production:

Despite industry efforts to develop alternatives, there are currently no proven, cost-effective bio-degradable netting solutions widely available that meet the practical and economic requirements of turf production. While some options, such as degradable or biobased netting, have shown promise, challenges remain regarding durability, affordability, and large-scale adoption. This underscores the importance of continued research and innovation to find viable, sustainable solutions.

The TGA decision to ban plastic netting only applies to its member organisations.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has introduced a number of measures aiming to curb plastic pollution, including:

- introducing a charge on single-use carrier bags;
- banning microbeads in wash-off personal care products; and
- banning commonly littered single-use plastic products, most recently legislating to ban the supply of wet wipes that contain plastic from December 2026.

In responding to this petition, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, said a consideration of the potential risks of plastic turf mesh will contribute to an upcoming review of the Welsh Government's Natural Resources Policy before the end of this Senedd. He further says that housing developers are required to “consider positive biodiversity outcomes when new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes whenever possible” as part of the Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales planning framework.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

On 13 May 2025, Janet Finch-Saunders MS tabled a question for the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jayne Bryant MS asking:

What consideration has the Cabinet Secretary given to requiring all new build housing with gardens to only have turf that is plastic free?

The Cabinet Secretary responded on 22 May 2025:

The Welsh Government is committed to tackling plastic pollution. We regularly review and update our policies to ensure they effectively address environmental challenges. We are currently considering the potential risks posed by microplastics as part of an evidence gathering process to inform potential further measures to reduce plastic pollution and promote the use of sustainable alternatives in various sectors.

Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales set out our approach to providing a net benefit for biodiversity as part of all new development. Whilst Planning Policy Wales does not explicitly cover the use of artificial grass or plastic netting turf in new build housing with gardens, the principles of good placemaking require housing developers to consider positive biodiversity outcomes when

new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes wherever possible.

Additionally, there has been extensive Senedd action considering potential prohibitions of artificial grass, which is distinct from plastic turf meshing. Further information can be found in the [November 2024 research briefing for petition P-06-1472](#) "Protect our wildlife...ban plastic grass in Wales!".

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

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1535  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01271/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

31 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 July regarding "Petition P-06-1535 Ban plastic mesh netting in grass turf in Wales".

I am committed to tackling plastic pollution, which is essential to help protect our environment, biodiversity and human health.

Plastic pollution is a complex area, with microplastics originating from a range of different sources, including industrial and domestic activities. Across government, we are working collaboratively to enhance our understanding of the issue and take informed action. This includes drawing on UK-wide research, strengthening monitoring, and developing targeted policy interventions.

It is essential we take an evidence-led approach in considering the way forward on plastic mesh netting in turf. I have asked my officials to consider the potential risks posed by this product as part of a broader evaluation of plastic pollution. This work will contribute to the upcoming review of the Natural Resources Policy as we go into the next Senedd term.

The petition calls for housing regulations to ban plastic mesh netting in turf. Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales set out our approach to providing a net benefit for biodiversity as part of all new development. Whilst Planning Policy Wales does not explicitly cover the use of artificial grass or plastic netting turf in new build housing with gardens, the principles of good placemaking require housing developers to consider positive biodiversity outcomes when new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes wherever possible.

I hope this update provides reassurance the Welsh Government is taking a comprehensive, evidence-informed and collaborative approach to addressing the concerns raised in the petition. We will, of course, take account of the petitions recommendations as we continue to build our evidence base and consider appropriate next steps.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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 welcome continued engagement and involvement from stakeholders and the public as we develop our policy and deliver action to tackle plastic pollution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Huw Irranca-Davies'.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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

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

**P-06-1357 Draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan for Wales –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner, 30 September 2025**

Many thanks for forwarding on the letter from the Cabinet Secretary.

I have a few comments to make on his response:

1. This issue once again just shows that we need a Microplastic Action Plan or Plan of Action or Roadmap. The Cabinet Secretary quite rightly points out that microplastics (and nanoplastics too) originate from a variety of different sources. This consequently also means that the solutions will also need to be varied. As it stands at the moment, we don't have an Action Plan or Roadmap. We have nothing that helps identify all the different sources, all their different impacts (whether they be environmental or to human and animal health) and then all the different solutions. If we don't have an overarching plan we won't ever be able to see concerted action and we will have to resort to trying to flag up single issues such as this turf netting as they come up. That seems unnecessary and too time consuming rather than trying to deal with all the issues in a more joined up way

2. Quite apart from the microplastic issue, this is also an issue that impacts small animals such as hedgehogs. Our recent Open Letter to Welsh Government on this (Open letter – ban plastic netting in grass turf | Friends of the Earth Cymru) was countersigned by a variety of different hedgehog groups as they are the ones who have to deal with the aftermath of hedgehogs becoming tangled up in this sort of netting. The injuries they and other animals are suffering as a result of being tangled in netting are truly awful. The Cabinet Secretary points out that "the principles of good placemaking require housing developers to consider positive biodiversity outcomes when new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes wherever possible.". Unfortunately, however this in itself doesn't actually then mean any action has to be taken. The statement is full of words such as 'consider', 'promote' and 'wherever possible'. This is exactly why we are asking for some stronger action.

3. This is an issue where we do for once have all the levers in Wales that are needed to take stronger action. In a lot of other environmental or climate change related issues, Wales sometimes doesn't have all the necessary levers to try to affect positive change but on this we do. It would be incredibly disappointing therefore if we weren't able to take action on this. It might be viewed as a 'smaller' or somewhat insignificant issue compared to other environmental issues but we would like to make 2 points related to that – because it is a 'smaller' issue, it is actually then easier

to take action on (principle of 'low hanging fruit') and even more importantly, by taking action we could immediately reduce one of the impacts on wildlife. We know that biodiversity in Wales is declining at an alarming rate. Whilst plastic netting in turf isn't one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, it is still nevertheless one issue that can affect small animals and as such we really should be taking action on it.

4. We also need to remember that the UK Turfgrass Growers Association, the UK wide turfgrass industry body have themselves taken a vote that their members will not supply turf with plastic mesh netting in from next year onwards. If the industry body themselves aren't in favour, why would Welsh Government not then also follow suit?

5. Sometimes, when we propose changes, the argument is made 'but what are the alternatives?'. For this issue the alternatives are clear and obvious. One is to use grass turf that doesn't have plastic netting (this is after all what we have all been doing for decades up to this point) and there are plenty of suppliers of this sort of turf, including suppliers in Wales. The other, even cheaper way of course is to use grass seeds instead of turf. So there are 2 obvious and ready-made alternatives.

To sum up – given the fact that there are well established (and cheaper) alternatives, given that the industry trade body themselves don't like the practice, given that we have the levers to take action in Wales, given the fact that taking action would help reduce hedgehog and other small animal deaths and reduce microplastic pollution and given the fact that plastic netting in turf is actually just really unpopular with affected gardeners, there doesn't really seem to be any good reason not to take some strong action. If 26 years of devolution can't even allow us to say no to grass turf with plastic netting inside it, then we haven't done too well.

Many thanks

Bleddyn

# P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** RS25/11930-15

## Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1545

**Petition title:** Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms

**Text of petition:** Children in secondary education deserve privacy and safety, and not to feel forced to undress in front of peers/staff in an open communal changing room for a compulsory subject (although separated by gender currently). In a world where children are being empowered to be themselves to explore genders, rights, equality and inclusion, some comprehensive schools P.E changing facilities offer little to no privacy /dignity and that's a massive safeguarding concern.



Children have the right to privacy and to be safe, changing in an open communal changing room should not feel forced. Adults have the right to choose but children do not because inadequate existing facilities are being shared in high class volumes, this is a safeguarding issue. Young people have a right to privacy (Article 16 UNCRC), the local Authority needs to resolve this ASAP with the support of Government.

Clear guidelines are recommended in keeping children and young people safe while they are getting changed for reasons such as but not limited to:

- some children feel vulnerable/children are vulnerable;
- can cause anxiety;
- disabilities;
- those from different religions, beliefs and cultural backgrounds
- transgender, non-binary or questioning their gender identity;
- staff and volunteers can feel unsure about changing supervision and how to ensure that all children and adults are safe;
- being sensitive to those who physically mature at a much earlier or later age than their peers.

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

# 1. Background

In summary, whilst there is guidance for school toilets and washrooms, there is no specific guidance about changing rooms for PE.

Issues raised in the wording on this petition cut across a range of policy and legislation, including but not restricted to:

- facilities schools must provide;
- equalities legislation;
- safeguarding legislation and guidance;
- curriculum, inclusion and well-being.

The recent UK [Supreme Court judgment on the meaning of "sex" in the Equality Act 2010](#) has implications for how schools manage single-sex spaces.

Further information on these issues is set out below.

## 2. Facilities schools must provide

Part 2 of the [Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 1999](#) relates to 'school facilities.

### **Changing accommodation**

Regulation 3 of the 1999 regulations refer to 'changing accommodation', saying:

*Changing accommodation including showers shall be provided for pupils who have attained the age of 11 years and who are in receipt of physical education and that accommodation shall be readily accessible from the school grounds and from any accommodation provided for physical education within the school buildings.*

### **Washroom facilities**

Regulation 3 of the 1999 regulations also set out requirements relating to 'washrooms for pupils', saying that 'in every school there shall be facilities [...] which are adequate having regard to the ages, sex and numbers of the pupils and any relevant special requirements they may have'.

Referring to washroom facilities rather than 'changing accommodation' these regulations say that, except as provided in [regulation 4\(3\)](#) (for the needs of persons using the premises who are disabled), **“washrooms for male and female pupils who have attained the age of 8 years shall be separate.”**

This [Welsh Government response to a Freedom of Information request 2010](#) confirms that:

*The provision and design of toilets, changing rooms and washing facilities for pupils is a matter for schools and local authorities. The Welsh Government's [School toilets good practice guidance for schools in Wales](#), does not refer to changing rooms.*

In answer to a [written question in 2023](#), the Welsh Government said:

*The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 specify separate washrooms for male and female pupils over the age of 8. Gender-neutral toilets can be provided alongside single-sex toilets.*

*The provision and design of toilets, changing rooms and washing facilities for pupils is a matter for the school and local authority. The Welsh Government provides advice for governing bodies and head teachers on the facilities required: [school toilets good practice guidance](#).*

*Schools conducting a school-based consultation with learners will help ensure the needs of all pupils are met within new buildings and in making any changes to provision.*

Merched Cymru (Women of Wales) describes itself as 'a grassroots group of ordinary women from across Wales who are working to protect and strengthen the sex-based rights of women and girls'. Its [report 'Mixed sex toilets in Wales' schools](#) includes reference to some of the themes in this petition. Page 18 of this document: [Sex and gender identity: keep your pupils safe and comply with the law - for schools in Wales](#) refers to changing facilities. It has been produced by a campaigning organisation called Sex Matters and is not an official document.

### 3. Equality legislation

Part 6 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) ("the Act") relates to education and applies to all local authority maintained schools and independent schools. Section 85 relates to

the treatment of pupils. It says that “the responsible body of such a school must not discriminate against a pupil” including amongst other things:

- in the way it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
- by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service.

Section 85 (6) refers to the fact that “a duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to the responsible body of such a school.”

## **Accessibility strategies**

Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 says that:

- a local authority must, in relation to a school for which it is a responsible authority, prepare, implement, review and update written accessibility strategies
- the responsible body for a school must prepare, implement, review and update written accessibility plans.

In 2018, Welsh Government issued guidance on [Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils](#), which says that accessibility strategies and plans:

*[...] must consider all aspects of education and associated services provided by schools. These include not only the curriculum but also break, lunch times, schools sports, extended-curriculum activities and all aspects of attending school.*

Examples of questions to consider when preparing an accessibility plan are provided in the guidance, including:

- How does the size and layout of areas, including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, common rooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities and playgrounds enable access for all pupils?
- How can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing access barriers, such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) general duty is set out in [sections 149 to 157 of the 2010 Act](#), supported by [specific duties](#) set out in regulations. The PSED

places a legal requirement on all maintained schools in Wales to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has issued [Public Sector Equality Duty: Guidance for schools in Wales](#), which says:

*The PSED can help schools identify and take action on both persistent educational inequalities such as underperformance and poor progression, and some of the contributory factors such as sexual harassment and bullying.*

*The EHRC Guidance goes on to say:*

*When making a decision, taking an action or developing a policy, a school must consciously consider what the implications would be for the equality of pupils with protected characteristics.*

And that:

*Before adopting a policy, taking an action or making a decision, a school should:*

- assess whether there may be any resulting risks to, or adverse effects for, pupils with protected characteristics;*
- consider how such risks or effects may be eliminated*

The guidance says that schools must assess and publish the equality impact of proposed policies and practices and monitor these impacts to better understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on learners with different protected characteristics.

### **Implications of a Supreme Court ruling for schools**

In July 2025, the UK [Supreme Court judgment on the meaning of "sex" in the Equality Act 2010](#) ruled that references to "sex", "man" and "woman" in the Act refer to biological sex (a person's sex at birth).

This judgment has implications for schools, including how schools manage access to single-sex spaces. Access must now be based on **biological sex**, not gender identity.

The [EHRC's interim update](#) on 24 April says:

*Schools in England and Wales must provide separate single-sex toilets for boys and girls over the age of 8. It is also compulsory for them to provide single-sex changing facilities for boys and girls over the age of 11. [...] Pupils who identify as trans girls (biological boys) should not be permitted to use the girls' toilet or changing facilities, and pupils who identify as trans boys (biological girls) should not be permitted to use the boys' toilet or changing facilities. Suitable alternative provisions may be required.*

It goes on to say:

*The consultation on proposed changes to our code of practice for services, public functions and associations (Code of Practice), resulting from the UK Supreme Court judgment, closed on 30 June 2025. We are reviewing the consultation responses received and will produce a revised Code of Practice in due course.*

### **Welsh Government's position on the Supreme Court ruling**

Following the ruling and in Plenary in May 2025, the [Counsel General responded to a question](#) which included reference to gender neutral toilets in school and whether Welsh Government would provide further guidance to schools "to ensure that these gender-neutral spaces are removed?". The Counsel General referred to the Supreme Court Judgement and said:

*All they're doing is pointing out that, for the purposes of single-sex spaces, the biological sex matters. But the removal of gender-neutral spaces is not specified, and we will not be looking at it.*

In a response to a [response to a Freedom of Information request](#), published in July 2025, Welsh Government responded to the question

*Please indicate whether, in practice, trans girls aged eight and over may use facilities designated "girls"*

Welsh Government responded:

*The consultation on the updated guidance anti-bullying guidance, Rights, Respect, Equality, includes questions relating to amendments*

*to the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (“the 1999 Regulations”). We propose to make very limited amendments to the 1999 Regulations so that schools are allowed (but not required) to provide gender neutral toilets. This is alongside the existing requirement for schools to provide sex separate toilets for learners aged 8 and above. This maintains the requirement to provide single sex toilets and alongside this gives flexibility for schools to provide a range of toilet provision that will help ensure all learners are safe and comfortable using a toilet in school.*

- The Education (School Premises) Regulations currently specify separate washrooms for male and female pupils over the age of 8.*
- The provision and design of toilets, changing rooms and washing facilities for pupils is a matter for the school and local authority.*
- All children and young people need access to a school toilet that they comfortable to use.*
- Many schools in Wales make gender neutral toilets available to learners for a range of reasons.*

*This can include to address behaviours that can impact health and wellbeing, for example, bullying or smoking. This flexibility of choice means that learners who do not feel comfortable in sex separate toilets are provided with a toilet that they able to use. This can be provided as a choice open to all learners. This provision can be particularly beneficial for learners who are trans, non-binary or gender questioning.*

## **Revised guidance in Scotland**

On 29 September 2025, the Scottish Government issued revised non-statutory guidance: [Supporting Transgender Pupils In Schools Guidance for Education Authorities and Schools](#). It says this has been updated “in light of the Supreme Court’s judgement in [For Women Scotland Ltd v Scottish Ministers](#)”.

[Pages 22-25](#) refer to toilets and changing rooms. confirming the position that “separate toilet facilities for boys and girls must be provided in schools” and that “as the law stands, the facilities require to be made available on the basis of biological sex.”

## 4. Safeguarding legislation and guidance

Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#) places responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at a school with the local authority and the governing body. The Welsh Government has a range of [safeguarding guidance](#) including, [Keeping Learners Safe](#). It was issued under the 2002 Act and includes safeguarding procedures and duties under the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

The Keeping Learners Safe guidance sets out safeguarding roles and responsibilities in the education system. It does not refer specifically to changing rooms or washrooms. It does include sections on bullying and on peer-on-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviour.

The Guidance also refers to the [Code of Professional Conduct and Practice](#) issued by the Education Workforce Council. This code specifies the standards of professional conduct and practice expected of persons registered with the EWC.

As part of its suite of safeguarding guidance for education, the Welsh Government has also issued guidance on [Peer sexual abuse, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour](#) and [Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff](#).

## 5. Curriculum, inclusion and well-being

The Welsh Government has a range of guidance on [Pupil inclusion, wellbeing and behaviour](#).

This includes:

- A [Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing](#);
- Guidance on [Supporting learners with healthcare needs](#), including Physical Education;
- [Rights, respect, equality: guidance for schools](#), which refers to schools being expected to 'create an environment that promotes health and well-being (e.g. space to play and relax maximising the benefits of outdoor learning where possible, suitable toilet facilities, support healthy food and drink, ensure site security, etc.)' to achieve a whole-school approach to anti-bullying.

## Curriculum requirements

The [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) includes mandatory elements for 3 to 16 year olds, including:

- relationships and sexuality education (RSE);
- religion, values and ethics (RVE).

The statutory guidance, [Curriculum for Wales: Relationships and Sexuality Education Code 2021](#), says:

*The Welsh Government committed to covering the following themes in RSE: relationships; rights and equity; sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; and violence, safety and support.*

The section on 'Empowerment, safety and respect' says:

*Learners need to develop an understanding of the social, emotional, physical and legal nature and impact of harmful behaviours, including all bullying, and LGBTQ+ based bullying, sexual violence and gender-based violence in a range of contexts, including online.*

The [Religion Values and Ethics guidance](#) includes a section on 'Awareness of self in relation to others'.

## 6. Complaints

The Welsh Government's [School complaints procedures: guidance](#) requires each school to establish and publish a procedure for dealing with complaints about the school, or about any facilities or services the governing body provides for the benefit of pupils, their families, or people who live or work in the school locality. Complaints can be made by parents/carers, pupils, members of staff, members of the local community, governors, or any other person with an interest in the school, in line with the [guidance](#).

## 7. Senedd scrutiny

There has been no specific scrutiny that has included the provision or arrangements for school changing rooms but the following may be relevant:

- In 2022, the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPE) published its report, Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners. It looked at a wide range of issues but did not refer specifically to changing facilities. It refers to the Estyn 2021 report of We don't tell our teachers - Experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales. Again, this looks at wider issues and does not mention changing rooms.
- In July 2024 the CYPE Committee published its report, Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare? It cites an organization's evidence saying:

*Whizz Kidz highlighted that all aspects of schools buildings, not just classrooms, but also playgrounds, bathrooms, sports and recreation facilities need to be fully accessible.*

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1545  
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/00924/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

29 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 31 July 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms.

Wales has led the way on children's rights, enshrining them in law through The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. Wales was the first country in the UK to do so. The Measure requires Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child when exercising any of their functions.

We recognise the importance of listening to children and young people and taking their views meaningfully into account. We fund Children in Wales to operate Young Wales on our behalf, enabling children and young people to have their voices heard in government policy making. This provides a forum for children and young people to raise with us the issues that concern them most.

Safeguarding of learners is of paramount importance to the Welsh Government. All education settings in Wales have a legal duty to ensure that children have access to a safe learning environment; we expect these safeguarding responsibilities to be taken seriously.

The Welsh Government has issued statutory guidance [Keeping Learners safe](#) to support schools in creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children. This guidance must be read and followed by local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools), voluntary-aided and foundation schools, and further education institutions, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

All schools have statutory duties to operate in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. The arrangements that local authorities and governing bodies have in place to comply with these statutory duties need to ensure reasonable measures are taken to minimise risks of harm to children's well-being and that appropriate actions are taken to address concerns about the well-being of a child or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Lynne.Neagle@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lynne.Neagle@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales)

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

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

The [Education \(School Premises\) Regulations 1999](#) regulation 3 states that schools must provide readily accessible changing accommodation (including showers) for pupils who are aged 11 or over and who are receiving physical education. There must also be separate washrooms for male and female pupils who are aged 8 and over.

I acknowledge that changing areas could be places where young people are more vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse such as bullying or harmful sexual behaviour, especially in secondary schools where there is less supervision. School staff need to be able to keep children safe while allowing them privacy, I'd expect schools to make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing which take into account the needs of all children.

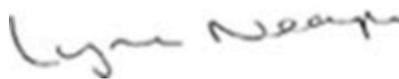
Experiencing unacceptable behaviour or being placed in situations where children may feel uncomfortable has the potential to seriously impact the wellbeing of children and young people and the well-being of every learner is a priority for me. In my [Oral Statement](#) in May 2024 I outlined that well-being should be the foundation on which our education system in Wales will be built.

In March 2021 the [Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being](#) was published. The framework is statutory guidance and must be followed by schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), Special Schools and local authorities.

The framework is designed to support the assessment of the well-being needs of learners, staff, and the whole school population by identifying principles that education settings should follow. It provides complementarity with the Curriculum for Wales, specifically the Health and Well-being Area of learning experience, which seeks to support children in building healthy relationships.

I hope this provides the committee with the information required to consider the petition.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

## **P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff peers in open communal rooms - Correspondence from the Petitioner to Committee, 25 September 2025**

The letter restates existing statutory instruments and statutory guidance (Keeping Learners Safe; Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999; the Well-being Framework). It confirms safeguarding is a priority and that schools "should" make adequate and sensitive arrangements for changing. However it does **not** set measurable, enforceable standards for private changing facilities, nor does it address many of the specific risks and lived harms (privacy, use of disabled toilets as a substitute, technology risks in communal spaces, non-participation and punishment, nor operational guidance for inclusion vs. privacy trade-offs).

This document does not adequately address the issues I raised:

- It cites existing regulations that require "readily accessible changing accommodation" and separate washrooms by sex, but the wording is high-level and non-prescriptive; it does **not**:
  - Define what "readily accessible" means in practice (numbers, ratios, or minimum cubicle availability).
  - Require a guaranteed **private** changing option for every pupil who requests it.
  - Give operational guidance about avoiding disabled-toilet substitution or how to manage capacity (e.g., one disabled toilet can't reasonably serve 30+ pupils).
  - Provide clear rules on technology (phones, cameras) in changing areas or explicit prohibition of devices and staff monitoring responsibilities.
  - Reconcile inclusion guidance (supporting trans pupils) with a requirement to preserve privacy options for others in a way that reduces safeguarding risk.
  - Set inspection, reporting or enforcement mechanisms so failures are identified and remedied centrally.

The letter points to frameworks and guidance but leaves significant discretion to schools/local authorities. That discretion is the core problem as it produces inconsistent practice and leaves children reliant on goodwill rather than guaranteed rights.

### **Specific concerns raised:**

- **Children denied the right to private dressing** → infringes on dignity and potentially the UNCRC rights as referenced in the document.
- **Risk from known and unknown predators** → local examples attached show that just relying on local safeguarding without environmental mitigations (private changing options, better supervision design) is insufficient.
- **Adults reporting historic trauma** → strong evidence of long-term harm from forced exposure or insecure changing situations; this supports need for system change, not just guidance.
- **Disabled toilet being used as the only private option** → creates access problems for disabled pupils and is an impractical and discriminatory "solution."
- **Technology risk (phones/cameras in communal changing rooms)** → requires explicit bans, supervision practices and sanctions.
- **Pupils opting out and being punished** → this is a safeguarding and equality issue (menstrual management, religious or cultural needs, neurodiversity); guidance should expressly prohibit punitive responses and require alternative arrangements.

- **Inclusion vs privacy** (trans children) → a workable policy must guarantee choice: private options for anyone who wants it, clear anonymised routes to request them, and safeguards against adults or peers exploiting inclusive policies.

### **I suggest the document should be asking the Committee:**

1. Will the Welsh Government commit to **amending statutory guidance or regulations** to require a minimum, enforceable standard for private changing spaces (not optional guidance)? If yes, what is the proposed standard and timeline?
2. Can the Welsh Government provide recent **data/audits** showing: how many maintained secondary schools currently have (a) private cubicles, (b) number of cubicles relative to pupil roll, (c) use of disabled toilets for changing, (d) recorded incidents in changing areas?
3. Will the Government issue **clear, national operational rules** on technology in changing areas (e.g., device ban, secure signage, locker use) and require schools to publish their local approach?
4. What **enforcement/inspection mechanism** will ensure compliance with “sensitive arrangements for changing”? Will Estyn/local authorities include changing-area privacy as an inspection point?
5. Will the Government require that **no pupil is punished** for non-participation when the reason is privacy/safety, and that alternative, non-stigmatising options are provided?
6. How will safeguarding and inclusion be balanced in policy for trans pupils so that **everyone** can access private changing without creating safeguarding gaps?
7. What training/resources will be provided to schools for risk assessment of changing facilities, supervision models, and reporting routes for technology misuse?

### **Practical, immediate recommendations the Committee could make**

(These are actionable and don't require waiting for new buildings.)

- **Statutory expectation:** require every school to provide a realistic ratio of dedicated private changing options per sex as a minimum, available on request without explanation, and not as the sole solution being a disabled toilet, forced change in open communal space, token number of cubicles or punishment for opting out or refusals for wanting privacy.
- **Non-punitive policy:** explicitly prohibit penalising pupils who decline to change publicly; schools must offer a neutral alternative (e.g., use of private room, changing in waves /rotation, or wearing PE kit to school dry sports).
- **Technology rules:** require schools to have a written, published device policy for changing areas (clear device ban, signage, sanctions).
- **Inspection & reporting:** require Estyn and local authorities to include privacy of changing facilities in inspections and to publish anonymised incident data.
- **Guidance on inclusion:** produce a model policy that guarantees choice — e.g., “any pupil (trans or not) may request a private changing space; requests will be honoured without public disclosure and without forcing other pupils to change in shared spaces.”
- **Short-term mitigations:** staggered changing times, temporary screens/portables, PE kit-on days, communicate these to parents and pupils.
- **Vetting & supervision audits:** ask for a report on recruitment, vetting and supervision policies specifically for changing areas, and lessons learned from local safeguarding case reviews.

## Evidence/gaps the Committee should request now

- National audit of changing facilities (numbers, type, access arrangements).
- Incident data related to changing areas (peer abuse, camera/phone incidents, safeguarding referrals).
- Case summaries (anonymised) of safeguarding failures related to changing rooms — particularly the local examples you mentioned (the Committee should ask for these files/attachments and explanations of actions taken).
- Consultation evidence with children, parents, disabled groups and LGBTQ+ groups on needs and preferences. The letter emphasises listening to children; the Committee should ask to see outputs from any such engagements.

The document reaffirms the current legislation /guidance of safeguarding and children’s rights, but concerns remain that existing guidance does not guarantee **private, accessible, and non-stigmatising** changing options for pupils. I’m asking the Welsh Government to table proposals immediately to amend statutory guidance or regulations to require minimum private changing provision, a device-free policy for changing areas, and enforceable inspection measures.

## Final points:

- This is a lived, cross-generational harm: adults’ trauma histories and children currently opting out show urgent need for structural change (not just reminders to “take safeguarding seriously”).
- Using a disabled toilet as the primary private option is not a solution — it creates a second-order discrimination and access problem.
- The combination of: open communal changing, modern phone/camera technology, and inconsistent vetting/supervision creates an elevated risk to children that statutory guidance alone, without measurable standards or inspection, will not remove.
- The petition is not anti-inclusion; it demands **choice**. Inclusive curricula and safeguarding can both be met if children are given guaranteed, private changing options and no pupil is penalised for using them.

I thank you deeply for your time

Louise Phillips

---

## Additional Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 29 September 2025

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Minister’s letter regarding my petition. While I welcome the recognition of safeguarding responsibilities, I remain concerned that the response does not adequately address the core issue: compulsory communal changing without privacy undermines children’s rights, dignity, and well-being.

### Key Points Summary

\* \*\*Children’s rights are not being upheld\*\*\*: Forcing children to change in communal spaces without privacy options undermines Article 16 UNCRC (right to privacy), Article 19 (protection from harm), and disproportionately impacts disabled, religious, and LGBT+ pupils.

\* \*\*Minister’s response is insufficient\*\*\*: Current regulations only require “changing accommodation” but do not mandate privacy or dignity. Guidance on safeguarding does not directly address this issue.

\* \*\*Supreme Court rulings confirm children’s rights must be respected\*\* (\*Gillick v West Norfolk [1985]\*, \*R (Tigere) v Secretary of State [2015]\*). Forcing communal undressing is a disproportionate interference when less intrusive, practical alternatives exist.

\* \*\*Safeguarding risks are real\*\*\*: Communal changing exposes pupils to bullying, body-shaming, harmful sexual behaviour, and heightened risks for vulnerable groups. It also creates uncertainty for staff about supervision.

\* \*\*What is needed\*\*\*: Clear national guidance requiring all schools to provide privacy options (e.g. cubicles, screens, staggered changing). This balances safeguarding with dignity and well-being.

### ### Full Response

#### #### 1. Rights-Based Concerns

\* The Minister highlights Wales’ commitment to the \*\*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)\*\*. However, Article 16 (right to privacy) is not being upheld if children are effectively compelled to change in open rooms where they feel exposed or vulnerable.

\* Other relevant Articles include Article 19 (protection from harm), Article 23 (rights of disabled children), and Article 12 (the right to be heard in matters affecting them). Current school arrangements in many areas appear incompatible with these commitments.

\* The \*\*UK Supreme Court has affirmed\*\* that children’s rights are substantive and require fair balancing with legitimate state aims (\*Gillick v West Norfolk & Wisbech AHA\* [1985]; \*R (Tigere) v Secretary of State for Business\* [2015] UKSC 57). These cases reinforce that children are entitled to dignity, autonomy, and protection from disproportionate state practices. Compulsory communal undressing is a disproportionate interference when reasonable, less intrusive alternatives are possible.

#### #### 2. Weaknesses in the Current Guidance

\* The Minister relies on statutory safeguarding guidance (\*Keeping Learners Safe\*, 2021 well-being framework, and Education Act 2002 duties). However, \*\*none of these directly address privacy in changing facilities\*\*.

\* The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 only require “changing accommodation” and showers. They do not define the standard, or require privacy provisions. This leaves schools inconsistent and pupils unprotected.

#### #### 3. Safeguarding and Well-being Risks

Open communal changing:

- \* Exposes children to bullying, harmful sexual behaviour, body-shaming, and peer pressure;
- \* Disproportionately affects children who mature earlier or later than peers, those with disabilities, those from religious or cultural backgrounds requiring modesty, and LGBT+ pupils (especially transgender or non-binary learners);
- \* Creates safeguarding risks for staff, who may feel uncertain about how to supervise without infringing on children’s dignity.

These are not hypothetical concerns — they are recognised in safeguarding practice, yet there is no national directive to address them.

#### #### 4. What Needs to Change

- \* Clear national **\*\*guidelines\*\*** should be issued, requiring all schools to provide **\*\*reasonable privacy options\*\*** (e.g. cubicles, partitions, or staggered arrangements).
- \* This would not prevent communal changing for those comfortable with it, but it would guarantee privacy for those who need or request it.
- \* Such a change would align practice with both safeguarding duties and Wales’ stated commitment to children’s rights.

#### #### 5. Conclusion

The Minister’s response acknowledges safeguarding responsibilities in general but fails to address the gap in statutory guidance and the reality of children’s experiences in schools. Without explicit national direction, many schools will continue to leave pupils without the dignity and privacy they are entitled to.

I therefore respectfully urge the Committee to recommend that the Welsh Government:

1. Reviews regulations and guidance to ensure privacy rights are embedded in school changing arrangements;
2. Issues statutory guidance requiring schools to provide adequate privacy options in changing facilities;
3. Recognises this as a safeguarding, well-being, and equality issue, not just a facilities matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Louise Phillips

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

Document is Restricted

# P-06-1546 Welsh Government should fund the Llanbedr relief road

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

**Reference:** SR25/11930-12

## Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1546

Petition title: Welsh Government should fund the Llanbedr relief road

Text of petition:

The Llanbedr relief road was cancelled by Welsh Government, who then promised Llanbedr a replacement. Now that plans are being finalised we call upon Welsh Government to fund the promised replacement road.

The community itself lives in fear, the transport situation for tourists is dire, and the solution we had was swept aside by you. We, the community of Llanbedr, visitors to Llanbedr, and those who travel through, petition you to take responsibility and fund the road.

More details

The community of Llanbedr was promised an “exemplar scheme” by the Welsh Government after it cancelled the funded solution which was about to start. It promised to work with our County to deliver a much better road, a “low speed relief road” was promised. But now that the plans are almost ready the



Government seems to want to divest its responsibility and pass the funding responsibility to another body, and for our community to “apply” for funding. We feel that it is your responsibility to fund the road. Pushing our community out to a lottery situation now isn’t fair or just.

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

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

## 1. Background

[Gwynedd Council's website](#) explains the issues caused by traffic in Llanbedr:

*...the community and visitors to Llanbedr are negatively impacted by motor vehicles that are required to drive through the village along the A496. This is reflected by the high collision rate along the A496 through Llanbedr, as well as the inconsistency in journey times through the village, particularly during the tourist season.*

Proposals for a new bypass to the west of Llanbedr were [granted planning permission](#) in March 2020. They were intended to ease traffic through the village, and improve access to Llanbedr Airfield.

While the Welsh Government is responsible for the Strategic Road Network, the maintenance and improvement of local roads, such as those in Llanbedr, are the responsibility of the relevant local authority. However, major schemes are often unaffordable without additional funding, often from the Welsh Government.

## 2. Welsh Government action

### 2.1. The roads review and development of alternative proposals

In June 2021 the then Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, [announced](#) a [roads review panel](#) to review planned Welsh Government road investments. New road schemes were paused while the existing project pipeline was reviewed, except where construction was underway.

The Welsh Government asked the panel to provide a view on the Llanbedr bypass scheme within four weeks. This was due to the pressing nature of a timetable linked to European funding deadlines.

In November 2021 the panel published its findings concluding the scheme as proposed did not align with the Wales Transport Strategy and therefore should not be taken forward.

The Deputy Minister accepted the panel's recommendation and announced the Welsh Government would not support any further work on the existing scheme. The Deputy Minister also stated he was:

*...committed to providing funding for the development and implementation of an alternative package of measures to address the negative impact of traffic in Llanbedr and in other villages on the A496, whilst also encouraging modal shift and reducing CO2 emissions. The package can also consider access requirements to the airfield to support associated developments. I have asked my officials to work with Gwynedd Council to commission Transport for Wales [(TfW)] to develop an alternative package for consideration, in line with the chair's recommendations. Any Welsh Government funding for this package will be via the Local Transport Fund and subject to the usual application process.*

Gwynedd Council received funding from the Welsh Government to consider options for transport interventions to improve the situation in Llanbedr. The publication of a study in October 2024 setting out the Case for Change was followed by a 6 week consultation on the proposals which closed on 6 May 2025.

The consultation website says a subsequent study will be undertaken following the consultation leading to identification of a preferred scheme. Progress after this stage “is subject to the availability of funding and agreement from Transport for Wales and Welsh Government on the recommendations”.

The Gwynedd Council website indicates that it meets with TfW and the Welsh Government monthly “as a working group of officers to report and discuss the transport work in Llanbedr.”

## 2.2. Welsh Government funding for local transport schemes

In recent years the Welsh Government has provided funding to support local authority transport priorities through a series of transport grants, including the Local Transport Fund, which authorities apply for.

The Welsh Government has established Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) of local authorities to deliver certain functions regionally, including transport planning. Regional Transport Plans (RTPs) are currently being developed and are expected to be finalised shortly.

In November 2024, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS set out his intention to reorganise transport grants and devolve “responsibility, decision making and the funding to the regions”. During Draft Budget scrutiny in January 2025 he explained, “... we are moving in that direction for full devolution to take place from 2026-27.”

On 24 June 2025 Mabon ap Gwynfor MS asked whether the First Minister would make a commitment to fund the Llanbedr bypass scheme. The First Minister told Plenary Gwynedd will receive “a share of regional transport grants worth £100m over five years”, continuing:

*...the Labour Government is eager to ensure that local leaders have a greater say on which roads, and so forth, should be developed. That's why we're going to ensure that financial allocations in the future are based on the decision made by the corporate joint committee. I think that it is important to note the fact that a working group has been established between Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to consider the options that are available to deal with transport problems in [Llanbedr]. We've already given £0.5 million to Cyngor Gwynedd to continue with the design development. What will then need to be done is that they will need to convince and work with the CJC to make the case for that funding coming to [Llanbedr].*

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Chair on this petition explains that Local Transport Fund awards are being used to develop the plans. He says he recognises frustration around changing Welsh Government priorities, and so is:

*... committed to giving local leaders a bigger say in how transport funding is invested in their region, so that we can take*

*a long-term, strategic approach to funding the transport improvements which are priorities for each region.*

He explains that the CJC in north Wales is finalising its RTP which “will provide a five-year plan for improving transport across North Wales”. He continues:

*From 2026-27, we will merge our current transport grants (including the Local Transport Fund, which currently provides funding to the Llanbedr scheme), into a single source of funding, and ask the CJCs to recommend how this funding is spent. Future Welsh Government funding to deliver the Llanbedr scheme from 2026-27 onwards will therefore be based on the recommendations of the North Wales CJC, following the priorities set out in their RTP.*

*I am committed to continuing to work with local residents, Cyngor Gwynedd and the North Wales CJC to address the issues in Llanbedr.*

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Llanbedr Bypass has been discussed extensively in the Senedd, particularly the cancellation of the original scheme.

In terms of funding for the new scheme, as noted above the First Minister responded to questions about funding of the scheme on 24 June, explaining that CJCs would be the decision-maker on the allocation of their share of Welsh Government funding.

On 25 June, Mabon ap Gwynfor asked the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Mark Drakeford MS, whether it was “credible” that north Wales local authorities would agree that £32m of their allocation would be used on this project. He also asked if he would “put a bid in” to the UK Government for funding. The Cabinet Secretary replied:

*... I continue to have discussions with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport about the work that he wants to do in north Wales, but the details of the programmes, well, he is responsible for those...*

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



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1546  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01263/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

04 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 31 July regarding Petition P-06-1546 Welsh Government should fund the Llanbedr relief road!

I recognise the importance of addressing the traffic and safety issues in Llanbedr. The Welsh Government has awarded Cyngor Gwynedd funding through the Local Transport Fund in the past two financial years to develop options for transport improvements in and around Llanbedr. Further funding has been awarded to Cyngor Gwynedd this financial year to progress detailed design of these options.

The work is considering a range of potential options for transport improvements in and around Llanbedr, including a low-speed relief road. I look forward to receiving an update about the recommended preferred options in Llanbedr following the completion of the study, which is due to be finalised this autumn.

I also recognise the frustrations felt when Welsh Government priorities change and funding for schemes becomes stop-start, preventing transformative long-term projects taking place. That is why I am committed to giving local leaders a bigger say in how transport funding is invested in their region, so that we can take a long-term, strategic approach to funding the transport improvements which are priorities for each region.

The Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) in North Wales is currently finalising their Regional Transport Plan (RTP), which will provide a five-year plan for improving transport across North Wales. From 2026-27, we will merge our current transport grants (including the Local Transport Fund, which currently provides funding to the Llanbedr scheme), into a single source of funding, and ask the CJCs to recommend how this funding is spent. Future Welsh Government funding to deliver the Llanbedr scheme from 2026-27 onwards will therefore be based on the recommendations of the North Wales CJC, following the priorities set out in their RTP.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

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

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

I am committed to continuing to work with local residents, Cyngor Gwynedd and the North Wales CJC to address the issues in Llanbedr.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

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

## P-06-1547 Sea bottom trawling is killing our marine wildlife... Stop bulldozing our marine wildlife!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 6 Hydref 2025  
Petitions Committee | 6 October 2025

Reference: SR25/12212

**Petition Number:** P-06-1547

**Petition title:** Sea bottom trawling is killing our marine wildlife... Stop bulldozing our marine wildlife!

**Text of petition:** Sir David Attenborough's latest documentary, Oceans, highlights the fact that a shocking 97% of our marine protected areas (MPA), created to safeguard ocean habitats, are being destroyed by being dredged and bottom trawled.

We call on the Welsh Government to ban all forms of bottom trawling by both foreign and UK vessels in Welsh waters. We are in an ecological emergency and need action now.

If we do not take action now, we will have no chance of stopping the shocking loss of biodiversity or mitigate the impacts of climate change.

This widespread fishing practice involves dragging heavy metal nets along the seabed, effectively bulldozing all sea life before it!

New research has revealed that this system of fishing pumps out one gigaton of carbon every year. This carbon is released from the seabed sediment into the water, and can increase ocean acidification, as well as adversely affecting productivity and biodiversity. Marine sediments are the largest pool of carbon storage in the world. In fact fishing boats that trawl the ocean floor release as much carbon dioxide as the entire aviation industry!

There can be no place for bottom trawling in a modern nature friendly Wales!

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



# 1. Background

Bottom trawling is a method of fishing in which weighted nets are dragged across the seafloor to capture species living on or near the seafloor. This type of fishing includes:

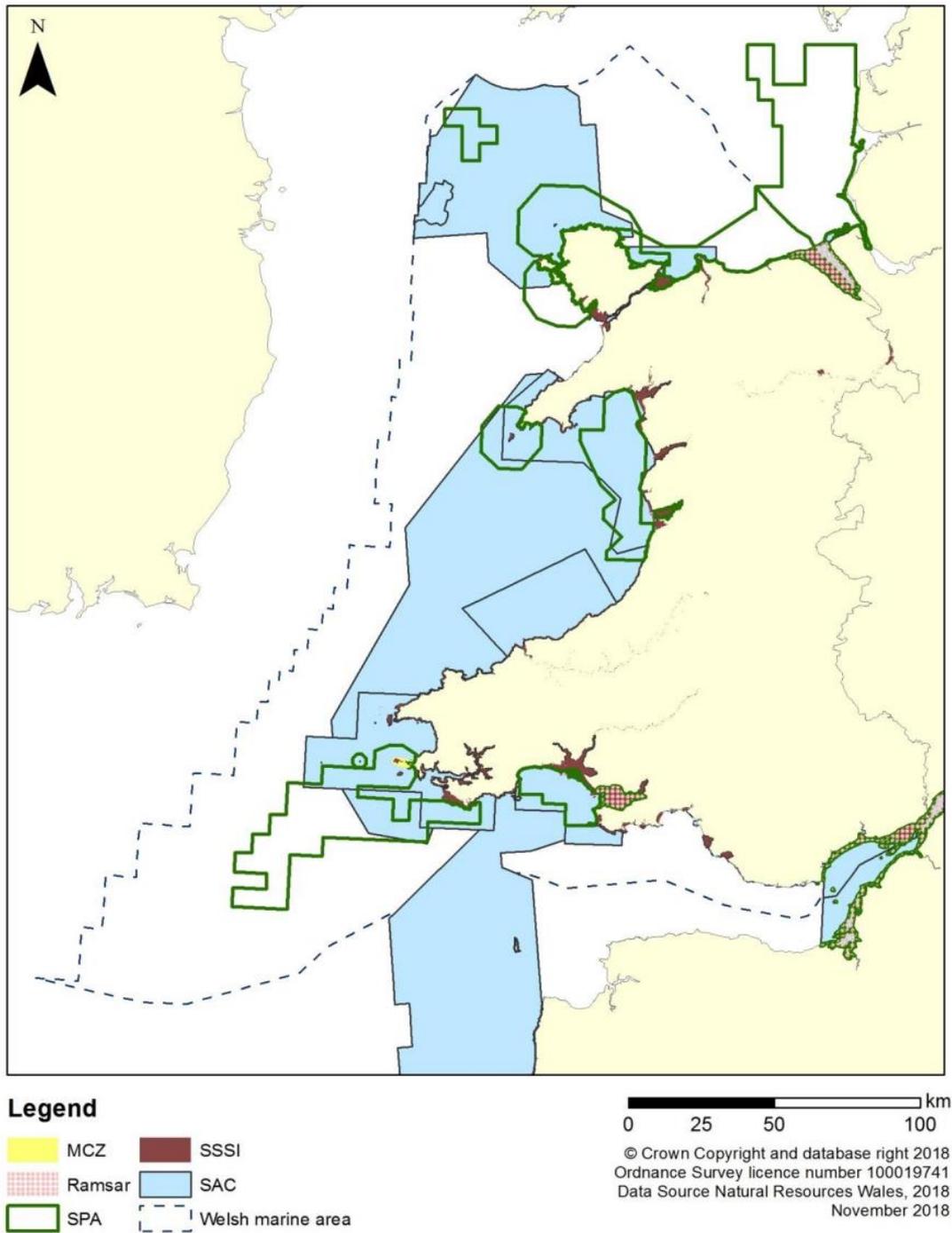
- Beam trawlers which target fish on the seabed by towing a net from either side of the boat.
- Demersal trawlers which fish along or just above the seafloor to catch demersal (bottom-dwelling) fish. A funnel-shaped net is towed behind one or two boats.
- Dredges, which are rigid structures towed along the seabed by a boat. They are used to target shellfish species such as scallops and oysters.

The [Wildlife Trusts say](#) that bottom trawling results in the indiscriminate capture of wildlife, the discarding of a large proportion of caught animals, and the release of carbon from the seafloor to the atmosphere. A [2020 report by Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW) found that the top 10cm of Welsh marine sediments store at least 113 million tonnes of carbon – equivalent to almost 170% of the carbon stored in Welsh forests.

The [Marine Stewardship Council says](#) the impact of bottom trawling on ecosystems is dependent on habitat sensitivity and the design of trawling equipment. A [2021 study by the Marine Conservation Society](#) looked at the impact of a bottom trawling ban in three UK Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It found that biodiversity increased by an average of 21% within five years of the ban coming into force.

MPAs are sites with a level of protection for nature in the sea. Wales has 139 MPAs (comprising [five different designations](#)), collectively covering around 50% of its waters. Not all ecosystem features are protected in MPAs. For example, Wales' largest MPA is the [West Wales Marine Special Area of Conservation](#), whose sole protected feature is the harbour porpoise. [Skomer Marine Conservation Zone](#) (total area 13 km<sup>2</sup>) is the only Welsh MPA where bottom trawling is entirely banned. A 2019 Senedd Research briefing provides more [background information on the Welsh MPA network](#).

### Map of Welsh Marine Protected Areas



Source: Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has broad competence over the management of inshore waters (also known as ‘territorial seas’), which extend up to 12 nautical miles from the coastline. The Senedd gained legislative competence over fisheries in the whole Welsh zone under the Fisheries Act 2020, although access arrangements for EU vessels post-Brexit are set out in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The TCA’s fisheries conditions were recently extended to 2038 under the UK-EU Common Understanding. Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs),

developed by the UK and devolved governments, are the primary policy mechanism for the sustainable management of fisheries.

The UK Government's Marine Management Organisation is currently consulting on proposed bottom trawling bans within around 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> (approximately one third) of England's MPA network.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In his response to the petition, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, says there is limited use of trawls among the largely small-scale and inshore Welsh fishing fleet. He says the main trawl deployment by Welsh vessels occurs in the king scallop fishery, which is regulated through the joint Welsh and UK government King Scallop FMP. The Welsh Government has also commissioned Bangor University "to investigate seabed sensitivity and benthic ecosystem integrity in areas of scallop fishing to inform future management".

The Cabinet Secretary says future limitations on bottom-towed gears would be implemented as part of future FMPs, including the planned Irish Sea Demersal FMP and Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal FMP. Both FMPs are due for publication in 2026.

He also highlight NRW's recent reports assessing the condition of Welsh MPAs. The reports looked at 84 designated features within inshore MPAs and found that "no assessed habitat or species within the MPA network were found to be in an unfavourable condition due to impacts caused by fishing".

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

A short Senedd debate on 9 July 2025 considered the question 'Should the Welsh Government prohibit bottom trawling in Wales?'

The Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee undertook an inquiry on Marine environment management in 2022. Recommendation 17 of its report said "The Welsh Government should set out the purpose and timeline for the public consultation on dredging and bottom trawling in Welsh MPAs". The Welsh Government accepted the recommendation, saying that proposals for any management measures will be consulted on after the conclusion of towed gear assessments in summer 2022. Although specific Welsh Government consultations

since 2022 have mentioned dredging and trawling (such as [consultation on the King Scallop FMP](#)), no broader consultation on restricting towed gear within MPAs appears to have taken place.

In 2021, the [Petitions Committee considered a petition](#) with 205 signatures entitled “Sea bottom-trawling is killing our marine wildlife ... Stop bulldozing our seas!”. Further background information can be found in the [briefing for that petition](#).

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

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1547  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01406/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

27 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 31 July, regarding a petition which calls on the Welsh Government to ban all forms of bottom trawling by both foreign and UK vessels in Welsh Waters.

Our marine environment is precious, and we need to ensure it remains healthy and resilient for future generations. Welsh seas are some of the richest and most biologically diverse across Europe. They are home to many habitats and species of national and international importance.

Wales has a wide network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) which cover 50% of all Welsh waters. Effective MPA management is critically important in ensuring that our MPA network is resilient and in favourable condition to meet both international biodiversity targets, such as 30x30, and domestic targets soon to be introduced through the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill.

There are many factors to acknowledge when considering bottom trawling within our MPAs. Fishing in Wales is largely carried out by a small-scale inshore fleet targeting shellfish. The use of bottom towed fishing gears, such as trawls and dredges, in our inshore waters (out to 12 nautical miles) is limited. The most prevalent use of such gears is in our king scallop fishery, for which we recently published a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP).

It is important to recognise that the king scallop fishery is already tightly controlled. Before permits are issued, the Welsh Government conducts a Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure the fishery will have no adverse effects on the protected features of European Marine Sites.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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.

Further management improvements are planned as part of the implementation of the king scallop FMP. My officials have been working with a range of stakeholders to develop proposals for a new framework of measures to enable adaptive management of this fishery which will be subject to public consultation. In parallel with the stakeholder consultation, we have commissioned Bangor University to investigate seabed sensitivity and benthic ecosystem integrity in areas of scallop fishing to inform future management.

In the wider Welsh zone, there is activity from EU vessels in the Celtic Sea who target nephrops and demersal fish. Their access is governed by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement - the terms of which the UK and EU recently agreed to extend for another 12 years.

Delivery of the FMP programme remains a top priority for this Government. It is a key mechanism for systematically improving management of specific fisheries and the use of certain fishing gears such as bottom towed gears, either within MPAs or the wider marine environment. Any management measures for other bottom-towed gears in Welsh waters will be developed and implemented as part of other FMPs. Namely the Irish Sea Demersal FMP and the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal FMP which are due to be published in 2026.

When considering Wales' MPA network, it is important that we recognise that our MPA network is highly complex with 139 sites in total. Some of the sites are very large and include protection for both mobile species and benthic (seabed) habitat features. However, individual benthic habitat features typically only occupy part of each site. Additionally, some sites are only designated for mobile seabird or cetacean species features and contain no designated benthic features at all.

Natural Resources Wales have recently published the Welsh MPA condition assessments which cover 84 features within the inshore marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) found wholly in Wales. These assessments provide critical information to help us understand the health of our Marine MPAs and are the first comprehensive assessments of our Marine MPAs at designated feature level. The assessments showed that no assessed habitat or species within the MPA network were found to be in an unfavourable condition due to impacts caused by fishing. The assessments can be viewed here- [Natural Resources Wales / Condition assessments for Welsh European marine sites \(EMS\)](#)

Skomer is currently Wales' only Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and was designated to conserve species and habitats of national and international importance. The seas within Skomer MCZ are subject to specific fishery bylaws which prohibit the use of bottom contact mobile fishing gear, specifically dredges and beam trawls.

Consideration by the Welsh Government for any further restrictions on the use of bottom towed gears within Welsh Marine Protected Areas will be based on robust evidence, the needs of the features and site conservation objectives.

Yours sincerely,



**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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

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

# Agenda Item 3.1

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

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

### **Text of Petition:**

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

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

The full history of the campaign is available on our website – [magorstation.co.uk](http://magorstation.co.uk).

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Newport East
- South Wales East



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1288  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01214/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

18 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 23 July regarding Petition P-06-1288 concerning delivery of a Magor and Undy Walkway Station.

As you will be aware, the 'Burns' stations & services comprise five new stations on the south Wales mainline located at Tremorfa, Newport West, Somerton, Llanwern & Magor plus provision of new train services between Cardiff to Bristol/Cheltenham.

Whilst we have pressed the case for these stations, the Welsh Government are not responsible for rail infrastructure other than the Core Valley Lines. Responsibility lies with the UK Government's Department for Transport and Network Rail.

I am extremely pleased that the UK Government Spending Review assigned delivery funding for the next spending period, including for the 'Burns' stations alongside £95m of development funding over a ten year period. The proposals that have so far been developed for the 'Burns' stations are at an outline business case stage. The next stage will be to progress the design in more detail and obtain planning consents, and we expect the UK Government funding to be available from FY26/7 to carry this out.

Station construction could be phased over 3 years, which would be largely driven by the need to carefully plan and deliver access to the lines for the construction works whilst minimising disruption to passenger services. Indicatively, the first stations could open by 2030/2031 and the last by end 2031/2032. Services would be planned to commence in alignment with the opening of the first stations.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

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

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

We need all 5 stations to be built to maximise the operational, economic and societal benefits they will bring, and we shall continue to press for this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

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

**P-06-1288 Deliver Magor and Undy Walkway Station, part of the Burns Delivery Programme, as a quick win - Correspondence from the Petitioner, 26 September 2025**

Thank you for the update and sight of the minister's letter.

Whilst it is reassuring that work continues to enable planning for the 5 stations, starting work on the necessary consents and the expectation of some funding next year, our serious concern arise from the minister's final sentence - "We need all 5 stations to be built to maximise the operational, economic and societal

benefits they will bring, and we shall continue to press for this". We have 2 questions -

- If funding isn't available from UK government to build all five stations (and the other rail projects in WG's mind), will the whole 5 station project be abandoned - i.e. wasting the money (which by then will be a significant amount) spent on all the design, planning and business case work? Potentially another M4 relief road pointless spend!
- Why can't the 5 station delivery be phased - starting with Magor & Undy - which, unlike the other 4, does not require major infrastructure change to bring services into operation?

We will raise this with the new TfW engagement manager when we meet him in October.

Kind regards

Paul Turner

MAGOR group

# Agenda Item 3.2

## P-06-1357 Microplastics Action Plan for Wales

This petition was submitted by Friends of the Earth Cymru, having collected a total of 3,259 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Microplastic particles have been found from the highest mountain tops to the deepest oceans and plastic microfibres from the clothes we wear are estimated to make up about 35% of the entire plastic pollution in our seas and oceans.

Microplastics have been found to be toxic to marine life and growing evidence suggests they are harmful to life on land, including ourselves.

We call on Welsh Government to draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan to protect life in our seas and on our land.

### **Additional Information:**

Microplastics are thinner than a human hair but they are causing big problems for life in our oceans and on our land

They come from many sources including plastic bottles, vehicle tyres and even from paints on buildings and road markings

They are also in the air and in our food chain. Fragments have even been found in the blood in 8 out of 10 people with as yet unknown health effects <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/24/microplastics-found-in-human-blood-for-first-time>

Welsh Government has a strong record of action on plastics but there is scope for increased action on microplastics.

We ask that Welsh Government work with relevant organisations and experts to draw up a Microplastics Action Plan to include things like addressing plastic microfibre release and microplastic pollution on land and in water courses around Wales and the provision of education about these issues in schools.

Microplastic pollution is a big problem in Wales – we must address it.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1357  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01298/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

31 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July regarding Petition P-06-1357, "Draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan for Wales", and for sharing the correspondence of 18 June from the petitioner, Bleddyn Lake on behalf of Friends of the Earth Cymru.

I would like to begin by acknowledging Mr Lake's continued engagement on this important issue and the work undertaken by Friends of the Earth Cymru (FoE) and the wider coalition group. Their efforts to bring together a broad range of views in support of action on microplastics are appreciated. I recognise the valuable role they have played in championing collaboration between government, industry, and other key partners.

I am also grateful to FoE and the coalition group for supporting my officials and Environment Platform Wales to organise the two-day event, Plastic in the Environment, held in December 2024 at Cardiff University. This was a welcome opportunity to explore the latest research and thinking on micro-plastics, nano-plastics and associated chemical impacts. I was pleased to hear the event was well attended and encouraged useful cross sector discussion.

In reference to the point raised about a follow-up event, I recognise the interest in maintaining momentum and broadening engagement beyond the academic community. While a second event has not taken place, we remain committed to supporting inclusive dialogue and are continuing to explore the most effective way to facilitate this. The establishment of the Plastics in the Environment Group, which convened in March 2025, is one such step. This group brings together researchers and academia to share evidence and inform future policy development, and we expect it to play a key role in shaping our approach.

As part of our broader initiatives, my officials are undertaking early work to explore how we might strengthen our approach to addressing environmental hazards and threats to health and our natural resources. Microplastics have been identified as a specific area of focus, and we welcome stakeholder involvement as this work develops.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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 have also asked my officials to explore ways to improve how information is shared with the public and interested parties on our approach to tackling plastic pollution. This includes making relevant updates and guidance more accessible in the future.

In reference to the suggestion of a litter and fly-tipping prevention strategy, I note the concerns raised. While Wales does not have a standalone strategy in this area, I want to be clear that we are taking action. We have a range of policies and programmes in place to prevent litter and fly-tipping, including continued support for Fly-tipping Action Wales and our work with Keep Wales Tidy and local authorities. On 25 July I published a [Written Statement](#) which updated our successes to date and our ongoing commitment to tackling these issues through a combination of education, enforcement and partnership working. This reflects our focus on practical, coordinated delivery.

Regarding the monitoring of microplastics in watercourses, I acknowledge the point raised about current testing practices. We are aware of the growing interest in this area and continue to monitor developments in the evidence base. As part of our broader work on environmental monitoring, we are considering how best to build a clearer picture of microplastic prevalence in Welsh ecosystems.

On the issue of plastic mesh netting in turf, I note the concerns raised and the recent decision by the UK Turfgrass Growers Association to phase out this practice. While we are not currently proposing regulatory changes, we will continue to consider the evidence and explore the levers available to us, including through planning and housing policy, where appropriate.

We recognise the petitioner's view that more visible and joined-up action is needed, and we agree that tackling plastic pollution requires sustained, ambitious and coordinated effort. However, this is a complex area that requires a multifaceted, evidence-led approach and time to get right, particularly where legislation and system-wide reform are involved. However, we are not standing still.

This Senedd term has seen the delivery of a comprehensive programme of action to reduce plastic pollution across Wales. This includes the Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023, which has already enabled us to ban or restrict the use of a range of commonly littered items such as straws, cutlery, plates and polystyrene containers. Further regulations to ban wet wipes containing plastic were approved in June 2025 and will come into force in December 2026.

We have also introduced a ban on single use vapes in Wales, a clear example of our willingness to act decisively where the environmental and public health evidence supports it.

These legislative actions are part of our Circular Economy Strategy – Beyond Recycling, which sets out our ambition to phase out unnecessary single-use plastics, increase reuse and repair, and keep materials in use for as long as possible. We have introduced an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging scheme and are developing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), both of which will help reduce litter and ensure producers take greater responsibility for the waste they generate.

We are contributing to international efforts through the UN Plastics Treaty negotiations, ensuring Wales' voice is heard in shaping global solutions to plastic pollution.

In the marine and fisheries context, we are working through OSPAR, the Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. This regional treaty brings together 15 governments and the EU to protect the marine environment. Through the UK Government, Wales contributes to OSPAR's workstreams on marine litter and microplastics, including developing indicators for microplastics in sea floor sediment and exploring ways to reduce plastic waste from fishing and aquaculture.

I thank the petitioner for their thoughtful and detailed correspondence, and I appreciate the constructive dialogue that has taken place with my officials to date. This will continue to inform our thinking as we go forward.

Thank you for writing to me highlighting the petitioner's concerns on this important matter. I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Huw Irranca-Davies', written in a cursive style.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

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

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

**P-06-1357 Draw up a new Microplastics Action Plan for Wales –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner, 30 September 2025**

Many thanks for forwarding on the letter from the Cabinet Secretary.

I have a few comments to make on his response:

1. This issue once again just shows that we need a Microplastic Action Plan or Plan of Action or Roadmap. The Cabinet Secretary quite rightly points out that microplastics (and nanoplastics too) originate from a variety of different sources. This consequently also means that the solutions will also need to be varied. As it stands at the moment, we don't have an Action Plan or Roadmap. We have nothing that helps identify all the different sources, all their different impacts (whether they be environmental or to human and animal health) and then all the different solutions. If we don't have an overarching plan we won't ever be able to see concerted action and we will have to resort to trying to flag up single issues such as this turf netting as they come up. That seems unnecessary and too time consuming rather than trying to deal with all the issues in a more joined up way

2. Quite apart from the microplastic issue, this is also an issue that impacts small animals such as hedgehogs. Our recent Open Letter to Welsh Government on this (Open letter – ban plastic netting in grass turf | Friends of the Earth Cymru) was countersigned by a variety of different hedgehog groups as they are the ones who have to deal with the aftermath of hedgehogs becoming tangled up in this sort of netting. The injuries they and other animals are suffering as a result of being tangled in netting are truly awful. The Cabinet Secretary points out that "the principles of good placemaking require housing developers to consider positive biodiversity outcomes when new development is proposed and to promote more sustainable behaviours and outcomes wherever possible.". Unfortunately, however this in itself doesn't actually then mean any action has to be taken. The statement is full of words such as 'consider', 'promote' and 'wherever possible'. This is exactly why we are asking for some stronger action.

3. This is an issue where we do for once have all the levers in Wales that are needed to take stronger action. In a lot of other environmental or climate change related issues, Wales sometimes doesn't have all the necessary levers to try to affect positive change but on this we do. It would be incredibly disappointing therefore if we weren't able to take action on this. It might be viewed as a 'smaller' or somewhat insignificant issue compared to other environmental issues but we would like to make 2 points related to that – because it is a 'smaller' issue, it is actually then easier

to take action on (principle of 'low hanging fruit') and even more importantly, by taking action we could immediately reduce one of the impacts on wildlife. We know that biodiversity in Wales is declining at an alarming rate. Whilst plastic netting in turf isn't one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, it is still nevertheless one issue that can affect small animals and as such we really should be taking action on it.

4. We also need to remember that the UK Turfgrass Growers Association, the UK wide turfgrass industry body have themselves taken a vote that their members will not supply turf with plastic mesh netting in from next year onwards. If the industry body themselves aren't in favour, why would Welsh Government not then also follow suit?

5. Sometimes, when we propose changes, the argument is made 'but what are the alternatives?'. For this issue the alternatives are clear and obvious. One is to use grass turf that doesn't have plastic netting (this is after all what we have all been doing for decades up to this point) and there are plenty of suppliers of this sort of turf, including suppliers in Wales. The other, even cheaper way of course is to use grass seeds instead of turf. So there are 2 obvious and ready-made alternatives.

To sum up – given the fact that there are well established (and cheaper) alternatives, given that the industry trade body themselves don't like the practice, given that we have the levers to take action in Wales, given the fact that taking action would help reduce hedgehog and other small animal deaths and reduce microplastic pollution and given the fact that plastic netting in turf is actually just really unpopular with affected gardeners, there doesn't really seem to be any good reason not to take some strong action. If 26 years of devolution can't even allow us to say no to grass turf with plastic netting inside it, then we haven't done too well.

Many thanks

Bleddyn

# Agenda Item 3.3

## **P-06-1378 We want farm subsidies to be extended to small scale and market gardeners**

This petition was submitted by Karen Schneider, having collected a total of 413 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Most farmers receive around 50% of their income from government subsidies. This means they have enough money to make a living from farming and they can continue to grow food. Most farms are large but small farms (1-5 hectare) are more productive and tend to grow fruits and vegetables for local markets. These currently are not eligible for subsidies, due to their size, which is unfair and shows a lack of support for local, seasonal food growing.

### **Additional Information:**

This petition is inspired by OurFood1200. They want to build farming that:  
Is small-scale, highly productive and commercially viable.

Helps provide food security in South Wales.

Gives the asset poor, particularly our young people, a chance to access land and start a regenerative farming enterprise.

Promotes community through local trading and shared community ownership of our landscape – a “foundational economy”.

Is regenerative: purposefully building biodiversity, fixing carbon in the soil, and avoiding harmful chemicals and pollution.

Creates short local supply chains that keep profits local and at a scale that opens new opportunities to all local farmers.

Provides communities with opportunities for education, training and mental wellbeing support

Encourages healthy eating by making fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruit and veg available to everyone in our region.

Reduces the impact of our food and drink consumption on carbon emissions and deforestation across the world.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

# Agenda Item 3.4

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

This petition was submitted by Matthew Jones, having collected a total of 718 signatures.

### **Text of petition:**

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

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

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

### **Additional information:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Senedd Constituency and Region:**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

18 September 2025

Dear Carolyn

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

Thank you for your letter of 23 July seeking an update on the timescales for our inquiry into the future of general practice in Wales.

In September 2024, the Committee held an initial stakeholder event involving GPs, practice staff, and other health professionals working in general practice, to help inform the terms of reference for the inquiry. A written consultation exercise ran from January to March 2025. This was followed by a roundtable event and formal evidence session with GPs, practice managers, and allied health professionals in July 2025.

Oral evidence sessions will continue through the autumn term, with a view to reporting in the new year.

Yours sincerely



Peter Fox MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

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

**P-06-1505 Review the Carr Hill Formula in Wales - the funding system for primary care - Correspondence from the Petitioner, 25 September 2025**

Good evening,

Thank you for letting me know about the upcoming discussion. I have listened to the oral evidence with some interest. I understand you have received my written submission.

To aid further discussion we have explored fully the distribution of GP funding based on the 6 criteria.

One of the key complaints is that very similar patient populations have wildly different funding via the Carr Hill.

The Excel Sheet attached has every single Carr Hill of each GP practice and matched against this is the "average value" of the patients (according to the Carr Hill formula – see below (1)).

Extremes of age and female sex produce greater workload. (range 1.58-3.3)

Cardiff North GP Practices represent 9 of the bottom 20 funded GP Practices in Wales. We knew this already.

However, now we can see that Cardiff North GP Practice also now represent 9 of the bottom 20 GP practices who are funded the least in comparison to the age/sex of their patients. (This invalidates any argument made that suggests that these GP practices get funded less because they are looking after much younger patients). (2)

This proves that Birchgrove Surgery - for example – who have exactly the "average value" per patient in Wales – a typical patient mix - are funded £290,000 less than an area with the same demographic. Of course – this is only compared to an "average area" – some practices have historically benefitted from much higher funding – in which case the funding gap becomes much larger.

Thank you for the time to read this. I hope this starts to break down why there is so much concern and anger towards the current system.

Dr. Matthew Jones

GP Partner

St Isan Road.

(1) ANNEX B of GLOBAL SUM CALCULATIONS [at isn17309doc1.pdf](#)

	<i>0-4</i>	<i>5-14</i>	<i>15-44</i>	<i>45-64</i>	<i>65-74</i>	<i>75-84</i>	<i>85+</i>
Male	3.97	1	1.02	2.15	4.19	5.81	6.27
Female	3.64	1.04	2.19	3.36	4.9	6.56	6.72

(2) Copy of Abstract of Article – that has been submitted for publishing.

Dr Matthew Jones

St Isan Road GP Surgery, Cardiff, United Kingdom

## **Abstract**

### **Background**

The Carr-Hill formula underpins general practice funding in the UK. It adjusts allocations based on six factors: age/sex profile, practice needs index, rurality, practice turnover, nursing home prevalence, and market forces. While intended to reflect workload, concerns remain about whether these adjustments deliver fair funding across populations.

### **Aim**

To evaluate whether Welsh GP practices, with a focus on Cardiff North, receive equitable funding under the Carr-Hill formula when compared against age–sex demographic expectations.

### **Method**

Freedom of Information (FOI) data from NHS Shared Services were analysed. For each practice, the weighted list size was divided by the total list size to derive an average Carr-Hill per practice. Separately, expected values based on age and sex were calculated. Practices were plotted on a scatter-graph (x-axis: average age–sex value per patient; y-axis: Carr-Hill score), with a regression line indicating expected allocations.

### **Results**

Across 370 Welsh practices, 9 from Cardiff North ranked among the 20 most underfunded relative to demographic expectation. For example, practice W97021 had a Carr-Hill score of 0.790 against an expected 0.999, equating to a deficit of over £250,000 annually in a 10,000-patient practice. Cardiff North practices consistently fell below the regression line, demonstrating that patients in this area are allocated significantly less funding than those with identical demographics elsewhere in Wales.

### **Conclusion**

These findings reveal extreme variation in funding for demographically similar patients. A

comprehensive review of the Carr-Hill formula is required to ensure fair, workload-based allocation across Welsh general practice.

# Agenda Item 3.5

## **P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parent**

This petition was submitted by Lisa Owen, having collected a total of 1,914 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

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

### **Additional information:**

#### **What This Means For You**

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

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

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

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

Settings have closed already!

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

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Newport West
- South Wales East



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1530  
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00454/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

08 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 July regarding the petition submitted to the Senedd by Lisa Owen.

I appreciate you sharing with me Lisa Owen's comments. I can assure the committee and Ms Owen that her concerns and those of the sector are being listened too and balanced alongside all other considerations. I acknowledge the financial pressures the childcare sector is facing, including the changes to employer National Insurance contributions and the new National Living Wage, which came into effect in April.

We recognise the need to support an environment in Wales where the childcare sector can thrive and grow if we are to deliver our ambitions set out in our *Early Childhood, Play, Learning and Care Plan*. That is why we have put in place a package of measures to support this vital sector.

In demonstrating our recognition of the difficult decisions taken by the sector when determining their charges, the 2024 Rate Review for the Childcare Offer focussed on the costs associated with delivering childcare. This differed from the 2021 Rate Review which focussed on the cost of purchasing childcare and therefore this time we were able to take a more in-depth look at the challenges faced by the sector and respond accordingly.

As you are aware, this resulted in the increase in the hourly rate paid to childcare providers to £6.40. This represents an increase of 28% and took effect from 7 April 2025. Additionally, the review included consideration of evidence from the sector and Cwlwm partners in respect of inflationary increases, the impact of UK Government decisions and the need to respond more quickly to pressure which resulted in the commitment that future Childcare Offer rate reviews would be undertaken on an annual basis, along with the terms and conditions of the Offer.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@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.

Our evidence, gathered through the review process, indicates that the experience outlined by Ms Owen is not shared by the majority of providers delivering the Offer. We [estimate](#) 80 per cent of childcare services caring for 3 and 4 year-olds were charging less than £6.40 for an hour of this care, resulting in a financial gain arising from the Rate Review. Newport, where Ms Owen is based, is estimated to have the second highest childcare fees for care of 3 and 4 year-olds of all Welsh local authorities.

On the matter of top-up fees, the Welsh Government does not have the necessary regulatory powers over childcare providers in Wales to mandate business models of operation and childcare providers are permitted to stipulate their own operational hours for the Childcare Offer. However, it has always been clear in our guidance that childcare providers who chose to deliver the Offer, must agree to the terms and conditions, and are not permitted to charge parents any hourly top-up fees for the 3 and 4-year-olds who are attending under the terms of the Offer, or any other additional charge which it does not also charge parents who are not in receipt of the Offer

Ms Owen contacted Welsh Government officials, via her local authority, in April 2025, regarding the update in the Terms and Conditions of the Childcare Offer. At that time the minimal changes that reflected the rate uplift were detailed to her. This included the following paragraph, which was identified as being retained from the previous version of the Terms and Conditions, but adjusted to reflect the new rate.

***Top-up rates when your normal rate is higher***

*You cannot charge for hourly top-up rates if you normally charge more than £6.40 per hour. Providers who are found to breach the terms of the Childcare Offer and charge hourly top-up fees may no longer be funded to deliver the Offer.*

Ms Owen has suggested that a variation in the costs of childcare are a feature of parental choice, where parents choose to pay more for a setting with larger overheads. In practice, not all parents' are able to exercise choice in selecting childcare. The [childcare capacity](#) of local areas in Wales is influenced by factors including socio-economic deprivation, population change and rurality, meaning that many families face more restricted options. In this context, additional fees for funded programmes would introduce a cost to some families that they would not be able to avoid, therefore restricting their ability to access an entitlement.

We have also seen increasing representation from parents regarding top-up fees, and they tell us that additional costs introduced by their childcare provider are putting them under considerable financial pressure. In any review of our current charging policy, we would need to carefully balance what is affordable for the provider and what is affordable for parents, while supporting both.

As a result of the representations from parents and providers, my officials are currently undertaking engagement with Cwlwm partners, local authorities, childcare providers, and parents across Wales, through our annual parent and provider surveys, to gather evidence on the prevalence and impact of additional charges and top-up fees on the Childcare Offer Policy. These surveys are live until 15 August and will inform discussions and decisions on a way forward for this issue.

We are also aware of the administrative burden on the sector, which is why since November 2022, the Childcare Offer has been delivered via a single, national digital service. This has brought a more consistent experience for parents and childcare providers across Wales, improved compliance with Welsh language standards, streamlined administrative processes, and robust data security. This has also brought a consistent payment schedule across Wales, with childcare providers able to claim payments as frequently as once a week and receive payment within 4-5 working days.

We recognised there was a difference in funding between funded childcare and nursery education in some local authorities and have committed to ensuring funding is aligned. As a result of the rate review, we have increased our allocation to local authorities for nursery education funding rates. This ensures that each local authority is able to offer a consistent funding rate equivalent to that offered by the Welsh Government for the funded childcare element of the Childcare Offer, per hour per child, to all non-maintained settings funded to deliver nursery education.

It's disappointing to hear that the paperwork Ms Owen's is required to complete, as part of the local authority process, to allow her to deliver nursery education is a barrier. We will continue to discuss this with local authorities to ensure that effective and efficient processes are in place.

I take note of Ms Owen's feelings regarding the participation of her setting in the Flying Start Programme. The Welsh Government remains committed to our Programme for Government commitment - to "Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision".

All local authorities have set out plans for how they will continue to expand Flying Start childcare in their areas. Local authorities have deliberately focused their resources on their most disadvantaged communities in the first instance. This ensures that support reaches families in greatest need at the earliest opportunity. We are working closely with the sector to gradually build capacity to ensure that any increase to provision is sustainable. The rate paid to settings through the Flying Start Programme is set by the local authority based on the local market conditions.

The number of children reached by Phase 3 Flying Start will depend on take-up rates, but we would expect Phase 3 to reach more than 4,000 additional children in 2025-26. Ms Owen may wish to contact the Flying Start team in Newport to confirm their plans for rollout.

The childcare sector in Wales is a rich tapestry of different types of organisations, all with distinct operating models and particular challenges. We must support the whole sector if we are to ensure there is choice for families and appropriate support for all of our children.

I and my officials will continue to engage regularly with childcare sector partners across Wales who represent the voice of the sector, help us to refine childcare policies and take forward Welsh Government priorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and 'B'.

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

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

## **P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents – Correspondence from the Petitioner, 20 September 2025**

In response to the letter date 8<sup>th</sup> August from Dawn Bowden

As an introduction to this letter, I agree that the childcare sector is a rich tapestry of different types of organisations as it should be, and I understand that supporting all parents in accessing the service they require is important. And I agree that yes, the sector needs changes and adaptations but by forcing the percentage that looks after working parents, working parents that need care for their children after returning from maternity leave and flexible arrangements that can work around their working lives which day nurseries (the 20%) do facilitate, to close, is not the way forward. The sector that are currently happy with the flat rate are those that are not registered to take under 2's and generally work just outside school hours.

For the following reasons, and others, which I will explain more fully below, the fixed rate cannot work throughout the sector because :

- There will be a knock-on effect of lack of provision for babies, should the 20% withdraw/close.
- Every business is different with different costs, meaning they need to charge differently, otherwise they, as in England will need to close.
- There will be a lack of provision that have adapted to support working parents because it costs money to be flexible.
- The impact of closures will generally leave the sector short of providers if the rate reviews continue to be less than inflation/wage increases.

I have assumed, as it was not clarified, that the 20% referred to are the day nurseries as we work longer hours to accommodate working parents, generally have larger settings and therefore bigger overheads as we tend to own our buildings. We cater for the under two's an age gap not currently addressed in any of the childcare funding offers. This age range is also punished in some areas, as they are already charged more, as the ratio is 1:3 and the space they require is more so it costs even more to facilitate. This rate will increase further if Nurseries are forced to lose money to fund the other parental funding streams.

I contacted 6 local Nurseries to me this morning, ( I did only have a few days to answer this letter) and they all had waiting lists for babies, as do I. So if we are forced to close where will parents and babies go? They wont be able to access the 80% of settings who are supposedly happy with the rates for the moment as these providers don't cater for working parents with children under 2.

Every business has different overheads so a flat rate will never work. You say The Childcare Offer Rate Review 2024 focussed on the costs associated with delivering childcare. No-one has every asked me what my overheads look like, although when I started questioning the flat rate formula and the freeze back in 2023 I offered my figures, which was never taken up. So it seems to be suggested that a playgroup who rents with a full repair lease and a business like mine which has to pay for trees to be felled, drains to be cleaned, gutters to be cleared, gardens to be maintained, the list is endless, need to charge the same figure? An

Early Years Wales article based on consultations with the sector put forward the rate of £7.50. This report has been submitted to Welsh Government and via Federation of Small Business. I am so utterly frustrated that we are being made out to be gold diggers and only doing what we do for financial gain.

We have the most precious gift in life in our hands and every day, I hear Welsh Government refer to the first 1000 days, but in the same breath you will sit back and watch an essential part of the childcare sector disappear. Not because you don't have the money in the budget but because you won't allow a business to do what it needs to survive. If it's about the parents then leave them with the choice they have had since the childcare sector began. If they don't want to pay the shortfall, they can vote with their feet as has always been the case.

To accommodate working parents, I open 51 weeks of the year including bank holidays. I open 7am – 6pm and I charge by the hour unlike other nurseries alike to me so parents only pay for what they use. I have an acre of outside plays areas unlike the 80% they refer to that don't need to charge what the larger nurseries charge. I have won awards for the investment into Apprenticeships, which has always been down as an added cost and I pay my staff the Real Living Wage. I was graded excellent in all six areas in my Estyn and CIW inspection, one of now 3 in Wales to do so and can say that we are the flagship setting for Newport education (I have been told that by the LA). As I write this my 3 year olds are having 1<sup>st</sup> Aid training and that costs money. Are you happy to take all those extra experiences away from them because if I can only earn enough to just cover wages. All the extra services we provide to parents and children like this training will have to stop. During my 27 years, it's the extra special environment and extra experiences that we provide that parents have been to prepared to pay extra for. I don't want a report that states "adequate" because I can only afford to provide the bare minimum.

Referring to the fact that the rate was increased by 28% but not mentioning that was after freezing the rate for 3 years - which was never stated in the agreement when we signed up - is both tedious and misleading. Welsh Government have partly recognised their error by in 2024 inserting into the agreement that the rate would be reviewed each year. You may think that is fair but reviewing does not mean it will be increased in line with wages and I refer to wages as throughout the child care sector due to the child:staff regulated ratios, wages, unlike any other sector will always be at least 60% of our income.

Quoted from letter:

*On the matter of top-up fees, the Welsh Government does not have the necessary regulatory powers over childcare providers in Wales to mandate business models of operation and childcare providers are permitted to stipulate their own operational hours for the Childcare Offer.* Welsh Government has effectively taken over the running of my business without even knowing how it operates. If when we signed up to deliver this I was told that they would freeze the rate for 3 years or that I would potentially be in a position where the rate offered to parents wasn't enough to cover what I needed to be sustainable so I would have to dig into savings to cover it, I would never have signed up to deliver it. I lost £20k turnover in the second year of the freeze £40k in the third year. That was my business reserves which if running a business correctly we should have.

FYI "Standard 17 of CIW Minimum Standards (Note 'minimum) states Financial Procedures. Outcome: Children and their parents are safeguarded by the Registered Person operating sound financial procedures. The registered person is responsible for ensuring that effective financial procedures are operated"  
This I have done for 27 years.

Letters from Welsh Government continually point out that I can withdraw from providing the Childcare Offer funding, as its voluntary, but I am fighting because it is the parents will suffer should I do that. However to minimise the impact of losses I do intend to withdraw from providing the Education offer.

I have informed Newport Local Authority that I intend to withdraw from providing education as of July 2026. I am leaving it this long as I understand this is not fair on the parents and they need time to plan and have explained to the parents that as Welsh Government will not allow me to charge the difference between what they are offering the parent and what I need to survive, I have no choice. I will look to offer Flying Start to spread their funding opportunities through my parents, but it will be done with an exit strategy in place. I say this as this year Flying Start just about cover the rate in my area but my experience with the Childcare Offer as shown me I cannot trust what the future holds.

Those parents will now have to pay an extra £78 per week. However if I was allowed to charge childcare offer top up of approximately £12, they wouldn't have to

So here we are, the question, that no-one has asked us. It is hard to quantify due to the meal charging system they decided as every setting breaks it down differently and it is dependant on what hours the child attends which is what parents don't actually like, because it isn't clear or straight forward. At my setting we are working towards a 4 day week as we cannot pay the wages the practitioners are worth so try to achieve a work life balance instead with fits with the new working week patterns.

The following Financial Example (which not one person has asked us) illustrates the reality for both parties, parents and the provision):

A child attending my setting would be charged £7.80 per hour whatever their age.

So for a 40 hour week all parents of children under 3 would pay £312.00 per week.

If they claimed the 20 hours childcare and the 10 hours education that we currently offer, Welsh Government give them 30 hours @ £6.40 which equals £192.00 towards their care and the parents pays us for 10 hours @ £7.80 plus approximately £40 towards meals depending on their hours and I have to cover the remaining £12.

Now that doesn't look bad, nothing to make a song and dance about and nothing that a parent should object to, but you say different.

The problem is I need to protect my business from that gap increasing because I cannot afford to lose another £60,000 should the review in 2026 become 2% and the wages again rise by 10%. I am financially planning to protect my business, my children and the livelihood of my team.

FYI £12 per week loss for 30 children actually equates to approximately -£18,000 per year for me. The parent however has a childcare bill that has dropped from £16,000 to £2,500. (All approx.)

Quoted from letter

*We have also seen increasing representation from parents regarding top-up fees, and they tell us that additional costs introduced by their childcare provider are putting them under considerable financial pressure. In any review of our current charging policy, we would need to carefully balance what is affordable for the provider and what is affordable for parents, while supporting both.*

I would very much like to know what are the top up fees that parents are struggling with? I would like to see who and what demographic they consulted and how the questions were worded as my parents most definitely do not think that way. They are more than happy to have their childcare bills reduced but not at the expense of me closing the doors. I know I am not the only setting with parents who think that way. Our survey which had 573 responses did not get those responses. Also as we have not been able to charge top up fees to date so how have parents even made those representations? However in the Vales of Glamorgan, they have always charged the shortfall as the LA understood that they are businesses that need to survive and there were not any complaints from parents.

If you didn't break down all funding into sections, I agree you would have had queries as I would not look to charge Flying Start parents top up fees although that does seem to be diverting from being for disadvantaged parents to for all two year olds.

I will say I have completed one survey about the childcare offer and have print outs of what I submitted which shows the questions were in no way relevant and could never have produced satisfactory responses that would have informed anyone.

No-one has engaged with the sector. CWLWM are not our voice. CWLWM were set up by Welsh Government to bring the different childcare representatives together to work more seamlessly, which I agreed with as until then, they were duplicating too many areas which was a waste of money, but the bulk of their funding comes from Welsh Government and they have to carry out specific work stipulated by Welsh Government to get that funding and are told what to do with it. They are NOT our voice. We asked to have a representative on the policy working groups but that didn't happen. The only person I have met with (on behalf of the Childcare Owners) is [REDACTED] from Newport City Council who really has no say in this and [REDACTED] Senedd Liaison Advisor.

I do not wish to address the Flying Start Programme at this stage. I am aware that there are issues but again because they don't consult with the sector and because as with all funding streams, they are rolled out differently in different areas. Going forward we need actual representation on boards so the issues are addressed before roll out.

Yours sincerely  
Lisa Owen



Vice-Chancellor's Office  
Swyddfa'r Is-Ganghellor

# Agenda Item 4

Cardiff University  
Main Building, Park Place,  
Cardiff, CF10 3AT, Wales, UK  
Email: vco@cardiff.ac.uk  
www.cardiff.ac.uk

### Prifysgol Caerdydd

Prif Adeilad, Plas Y Parc,  
Caerdydd, CF10 3AT, Cymru, DU  
Epost: vco@caerdydd.ac.uk  
www.caerdydd.ac.uk

By email

Carolyn Thomas MS

20 June 2025

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to Petition P-06-1497 entitled "End Welsh Govt funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies".

Cardiff University is committed to providing open and transparent information about our research involving animals and our standards of animal care and welfare. We have signed the [Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK](#). As well as this, we provide information [on our website](#) which outlines our commitments in relation to animal testing.

Cardiff University uses cells grown in a lab, computer models and human tissues for some of our biomedical research. However, in certain cases, animals provide the only way for us to develop our scientific knowledge and produce treatments and cures for many serious conditions. Research using animals has saved and improved the lives of millions of people and animals.

We are increasingly able to use alternative methods of research, and are at the international forefront of developing many of these methods. We are also committed to the principles of replacement, refinement and reduction - the 3Rs. However, the study of animals remains essential. In these cases, our researchers who work with animals follow all the high ethical standards and strict legislation that safeguard animal welfare in the UK. I have included more information on our commitment to the 3Rs as an appendix.

In addition to this, we fully support and endorse the [ARRIVE](#) (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) guidelines, developed as part of an NC3Rs initiative to improve the design, analysis and reporting of animal research.

If you have any further questions on this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Wendy Larner  
Vice-Chancellor



Mae'r Brifysgol yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The University welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English. Corresponding in Welsh will not result in a delay.

Elusen Gofrestredig, rhif 1136855  
Registered Charity, no. 1136855

## Appendix: Reduce, refine, replace

Cardiff University is committed to the principles of reduction, refinement and replacement. The 3Rs state that procedures on animals for scientific research may only be carried out if there are no scientifically suitable alternatives that can replace the use of animals, reduce the number of animals needed, or refine the procedures to cause less suffering.

We recognise individual achievement in the application of the 3Rs, as well as contribution to innovation in the 3Rs. We do this both through local initiatives and by participating in national working groups established by the [National Centre for the 3Rs](#) (NC3Rs) and other bodies.

### *Replacement*

We ensure that animals are used only when there is no alternative by:

- guiding applicants for project licences to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to non-animal methods and have consulted the information on alternatives available on the web
- investing in the continued development of non-animal methods, such as computer modelling and in vitro tissue cultures where we have sufficient understanding of processes. For example, the School of Biosciences has developed a [micro-lung](#) using human tissue available as a by-product of lung and heart surgery. We are making a major investment in [brain imaging equipment](#) to study human brains in living people.
- encouraging non-animal methods through training, development and seminar programmes.

### *Reduction*

We ensure that researchers reduce the numbers of animals used by:

- regularly reviewing the numbers of animals used under individual project licences
- providing researchers with advice on experimental design and statistical analysis from experienced project licence holders
- managing breeding programmes carefully
- investing in the continued development of advanced technologies, including imaging techniques such as PET scans'



## *Refinement*

We achieve the highest possible standards of animal care and welfare and embed a culture of care in all those involved in research by:

- putting in place many safeguards to ensure the welfare of animals
- ensuring all of our animals, whether within a breeding colony, held as stock or involved in research, receive the same level of attention to their welfare from our committed animal carers
- ensuring the use of environmental enrichment in the form of nesting materials, toys, houses, fun tunnels, chew sticks etc.
- ensuring our researchers are constantly assessing their procedures to find improvements for the experience of the animals used in research.



Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Chair of the Petitions Committee

Thank you for your letter dated 12 May 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1497: *End Welsh Government funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies*.

Please find below a formal response from Swansea University, provided on behalf of the institution by Professor Helen Griffiths, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation:

Swansea University recognises the ethical considerations and public concern surrounding the use of animals in research. We are committed to the highest standards of animal welfare and ethical conduct in all aspects of our research. While the University has not set a definitive timeline for ending all animal use in research, our practices reflect a strong commitment to the principles of the 3Rs — *Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement* — which guide the responsible use of animals in science.

In particular:

1. **Conservation-led research:** A significant portion of our animal research is conducted in the context of conservation, where the species under study is often the most appropriate model. For example, Swansea University's Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research (CSAR) was awarded the Animal Health and Welfare Award at the 2025 Annual Aquaculture Awards (20 June 2025), recognising our dedication to the welfare and protection of aquatic species.
2. **Commitment to alternatives:** Where research relates to human health or biomedical advancement, animal models are used only when no viable alternative currently exists. Swansea University actively supports and invests in the development of alternative methodologies, including advanced *in vitro* systems and computational models. Notably, the University is a UK leader in developing *in vitro* approaches for nanoparticle safety assessment — further details can be found on our [Nanotechnology and Safety Research page](#).
3. **Governance and ethical review:** All animal research proposals undergo rigorous ethical scrutiny through our Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB), which ensures that animals are only used when essential, and that research design minimises harm and maximises welfare.
4. **Training and oversight:** All staff and students involved in animal research are trained and regularly assessed to ensure compliance with legal, ethical and scientific standards. This includes adherence to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPAs) and ongoing evaluation of competency.

Swansea University is also a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research in the UK and is committed to transparency regarding the use of animals in research.

More information about our approach can be found here: [Animals in Research – Swansea University](#)

We hope this response provides clarity on our current position and the measures we are taking to minimise and ultimately reduce the need for animal use in research. Please do not hesitate to contact us if further information is required.

Yours sincerely,  
Olivia Wild  
On behalf of Professor Helen Griffiths  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation

**Olivia Wild**

**Swyddog Portffolio (SLT) | Portfolio Officer (SLT)**

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Y Pwyllgor Deisebau / Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru/ Welsh Parliament

30<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Trwy ebost/By email: [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

**Petition P-06-1497 End Welsh Govt funding of animal experiments and divert funds to modern, human-relevant technologies**

Thank you for your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and subsequent email dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Details of the University's position on the use of animal testing as part of our research activity is set out in detail on our website available [here](#). Aberystwyth University abides by the principles of the three R's in animal research: replacement, reduction and refinement which aims to minimising animal use through better experimental and statistical design, obtaining comparable levels of information from fewer animals or obtaining more information from the same number of animals, thereby reducing future use of animals.

Best wishes



Professor Jon Timmis  
Vice-Chancellor

*Bangor University prioritises the uptake and development of alternative methods to the use of animals in science, and promotes techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). We adhere to the UK regulatory system for licensing animal studies and enforcing legal standards in the very limited areas of research involving animals at Bangor University.*

*Bangor University recognises that, in some areas of research, the use of animals in some research remains important in advancing our understanding of biological systems. This research contributes to the development of safe new medicines, treatments and technologies, and in testing chemicals. It helps protect both humans and animals from harm and supports the safety and sustainability of our environment.*

*At Bangor University, only a small proportion of research projects involve animals, reflecting a strong commitment to minimising their use.*