

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel

Hybrid

Meeting date: 26 January 2026

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

Petitions@senedd.wales

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(Pages 1 – 27)

2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1542 Commit to Support Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's future

(Pages 28 – 34)

2.2 P-06-1556 Childcare funding for working parents when their children are +9 months

(Pages 35 – 40)

2.3 P-06-1566 Welsh Government must legislate for full regard to Local Nature Reserves including Cosmeston LNR

(Pages 41 – 49)

2.4 P-06-1563 Abandon the plan to make Wales a "nation of sanctuary"

(Pages 50 – 56)

2.5 P-06-1567 Condemn and investigate far-right group 'White Vanguard' in Wales

(Pages 57 – 60)

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-06-1500 Neath Port Talbot UNISON needs additional Funding for NPT Council

(Pages 61 – 65)



- 3.2 P-06-1522 Convene a summit to accelerate sustainable and ethical investment by public sector pensions
(Pages 66 – 74)
- 3.3 P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit
(Pages 75 – 77)
- 3.4 P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital
(Pages 78 – 83)
- 3.5 P-06-1545 Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms
(Pages 84 – 90)
- 3.6 P-06-1561 Close the gender gap in Welsh women's football: fund a national equality plan
(Pages 91 – 97)

4 Papers to note

- 4.1 P-06-1541 Produce a Clean Water Bill for Wales and for Welsh Rivers
(Pages 98 – 99)

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

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 26 Ionawr 2026
Petitions Committee | 26 January 2026

Reference: SR25/12887-6

Petition Number: [P-06-1542](#)

Petition title: Commit to Support Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's future

Text of petition: The Welsh Government has announced that it will be withdrawing its annual grant of £90,000 from March 2026. Without this funding the school will be forced to close, dismantling the most effective tool for promoting the Welsh language in London.

More information: This grant comes from the 'Welsh 2050' strategy, which aims to reach one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Welsh Government has said that this £90k will still be used to promote the language in London, but has not provided details about how. It is clear that the best way to promote any language is to educate the next generation of fluent speakers. The school is recovering from the effects of covid, and is growing in numbers. Now is the time to invest in its future, not to cut funding.

1. Background

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is an independent school for nursery and primary school aged children, in Hanwell in the borough of Ealing, West London. The school teaches through the medium of English and Welsh, with the aim that pupils become fully bilingual by year 6.



Although it is an independent school and therefore is not required to do so, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain **teaches the Curriculum for Wales**, including the four purposes and six Areas of Learning and Experience, as documented on its [website](#).

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's website has a set of [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), which include "which school do pupils attend after Year 6?". The answer provided is "Some of our pupils move on to local schools in London; other families move back to Wales where the pupils can continue with Welsh-medium education."

This petition has been submitted by the chair of the school's governing body.

1.1. Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's financial model

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain is a **fee-charging school**, whereby the **cost is £4,374 per year or £364.50 per month** (as of 2024/25) for children aged 5 years and older.¹

The [school does say](#) it accepts all children regardless of the family's ability to pay the full fees and that it has a "small fund to assist with this".

The petition states that the **Welsh Government provides £90,000 annually to Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain** from the Cymraeg 2050 budget. An answer to a written question ([WSQ96921](#)) in July 2025 from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language stated that **since 2015, Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain has received from the Welsh Government an annual grant of £90,000 per financial year**. In 2022-23, it received a one-off additional payment of 4% of its annual grant, totalling £3,600.

The First Minister told the Senedd in [July 2025 \(para 2\)](#) that over the past decade, the Welsh Government has provided Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain with more than £1.2 million in grant funding.

2. The Welsh Government's position

The Cabinet Secretary's letter (dated 18 December 2025) says the Welsh Government has been **considering "the fact that the number of pupils attending the school has decreased"** and that it is looking at what are **"the most effective ways of promoting the Welsh language in London"**. It says this is as part of "grant evaluation and monitoring processes". Both the Cabinet Secretary ([25 June](#) - para

¹ For children under 5 years old, the 'Nursery Education Grant' in England can pay for 15 hours provision per week from the term after the child's third birthday. Families may be entitled to up to 30 hours free childcare / nursery education at the school from an earlier age under the [Free Childcare for Working Parents scheme](#) in England.

34) and the First Minister ([1 July](#) – para 5) told the Senedd in summer 2025 that Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain had around only 10 pupils on roll.

The Welsh Government agreed in June 2025 to provide **funding until the end of the 2025/26 academic year** and have since **invited the school to apply for funding for a further three years**. The Cabinet Secretary’s letter says this is to be considered “in the New Year”.

2.1. Policies regarding Welsh Language Education

The [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#) requires that the Welsh Government’s [Welsh language strategy](#) includes a target of reaching at least one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The strategy must also set targets for increasing the number of pupils attending ‘Primarily Welsh Language’ schools, and for increasing the amount of Welsh language education provided in ‘Dual Language’ and ‘Primarily English Language, Partly Welsh’ schools.

The 2025 Act placed the Welsh Government’s existing Cymraeg 2050 target (set in 2017) on a statutory basis. The provisions in the 2025 Act relating to schools apply to maintained schools in Wales only. It has been mentioned in this briefing to give an indication of the Welsh Government’s policies towards the Welsh language, rather than being of direct relevance to this petition.

3. Welsh Parliament action

As discussed above, there have been oral questions in the Senedd on this subject:

- to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language on [25 June 2025 \(paras 29-37\)](#); and
- to the First Minister on [1 July 2025 \(paras 1-9\)](#).

4. Media coverage

There has been some media coverage of this subject, including BBC articles on [19 June](#), [1 July](#) and [13 November](#) 2025.

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

Mark Drakeford AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-06-1542
Ein cyf/Our ref: MDFWL/00513/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
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18 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding 'Petition P-06-1542 Commit to support Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's future'.

Over the past few months, as part of our grant evaluation and monitoring processes, my officials have held a series of meetings with representatives from Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain. At these meetings, the schools' situation was discussed, the fact that the number of pupils attending the school has decreased and the most effective ways of promoting the Welsh language in London.

I met with representatives from Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain early in the summer, and as a result it was agreed on 20 June that we would allocate funding until the end of the 2025-26 academic year. Since then, as is the case with all grant recipients, we have invited the school to apply for a grant for up to three years. The evaluation process will take place in the new year.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

I understand that the situation over the past months have been difficult, however I am confident that the discussions have been constructive, and as a result we continue to work closely with the school to plan strategically to ensure a sustainable future for Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Mark Drakeford AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

**P-06-1542 Commit to Support Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's future -
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 15 January 2026**

**Response to the Petitions Committee in light of the Cabinet Secretary's letter
regarding Petition P-06-1542:**

"Commit to support Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain's future"

We welcome the response from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language and are grateful for the engagement that has taken place between Welsh Government officials, Ministers and representatives of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain over recent months.

We recognise and appreciate the funding allocation agreed in June to support the school through to the end of the 2025–26 academic year, and we welcome the fact that the school has now been invited to apply for a grant of up to three years in line with standard Welsh Government processes, which was submitted at the end of last year. This represents an important step forward and goes a long way towards addressing the immediate concerns raised in the petition.

We welcome the acknowledgement within the letter of the wider role Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain plays in promoting the Welsh language in London. While pupil numbers fell to unusually low levels in the period following the COVID-19 pandemic, we are encouraged that numbers are now increasing and that there is clear momentum towards recovery. We share the Cabinet Secretary's confidence that, with continued strategic engagement and support, the school can re-establish itself as a thriving centre for Welsh-medium education and as a beacon for the Welsh diaspora in London.

As noted in the Welsh Government's response, longer-term stability will be critical in enabling the school to rebuild parental confidence, support pupil recruitment, retain staff and undertake effective long-term planning. In this context, the outcome of the forthcoming three-year grant evaluation process will be pivotal in determining whether the objectives described can be fully realised.

As discussions continue, we would also welcome consideration in future of whether there may be scope for a clearer strategic framework recognising the role of Welsh-medium education provision outside Wales. In particular, this could include reflection on how such provision aligns with wider Welsh Government objectives relating to language transmission, education and the Welsh diaspora, including - but not limited to - the ambitions of Cymraeg 2050. We believe this is an area that may merit further exploration over time, rather than an issue requiring immediate resolution.

If successful, the proposed multi-year grant would provide important medium-term stability and significantly strengthen the school's ability to deliver against the aims outlined in the Welsh Government's response. Until the outcome of that process is confirmed, however, we

believe it would be appropriate for the Committee to note that the longer-term issues raised in the petition remain contingent on that decision, and we therefore welcome the Committee's continued interest at this stage.

We would like to thank the Committee for its consideration of the petition and for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Yours sincerely,

Glenys Roberts
Chair of Governors
Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain

[For information, we have attached two short background documents - a research summary outlining the role of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain within the Welsh community in London, and a diagram showing the school's position within the Welsh-language ecosystem in London - should this be of use to the Committee.]

Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain

Parents and Alumni 2025 Survey

During the summer of 2025, we ran a survey amongst our community – current parents, past parents, and alumni. In under a week, we had 112 responses, around a 90% completion rate - which is extraordinary. The strength of feeling was overwhelming.

What was clear is that this school is not just working, it's transforming lives, returning investment back to Wales, and growing the Welsh language exactly as Cymraeg 2050 intends.

Here are some of the highlights from the research...

This investment returns to Wales

- **90%** of families have *already moved back, plan to, or say the school has kept that option open.*
- **40%** have *already* returned and transitioned their children into Welsh-medium schools or universities.
- **A quarter like that it has kept that option open for them**
- Alumni are now:
 - Studying at **Cambridge, Aberystwyth, and the University of Pennsylvania (Ivy League).**
 - Working in Welsh-speaking sectors.
- Raising their own children in Welsh. - **80% of past pupils have already or intend to raise their families in Welsh**

“Due to going to The London Welsh School, our boys were fluent in Welsh and were able to transition very easily to their new school after moving back to Wales.”

Welsh language going beyond the classroom

- 100% of past pupils have continued with their Welsh
- 84% of past pupils have or intend to raise their families in Welsh
- Many parents (native speakers) described themselves as *“lapsed” or “disconnected”* before their children joined the school. The school reawakened their Welsh identity, and in many cases **completely transformed their day-to-day use of the language.**
- **There is a massive uplift in connection to Welsh:** Before joining the school, fewer than 4 in 10 parents (39%) felt ‘very connected’ to the Welsh language or culture, but after involvement with the school, this jumped to an overwhelming **96% feeling ‘very connected’.** The school is clearly not just educating children - it's **reconnecting entire families to Welsh identity, culture, and community.**

“I hadn’t spoken Welsh for almost 25 years, and now I speak, message and write in Welsh EVERY day - it’s amazing how the language just came back to me.”

“Before my children attended the school I was a lapsed Welsh speaker... it reignited my love of the language.”

“The London Welsh School helped me to reconnect with my Welsh identity... I became more familiar with the richness of the Welsh culture and language.”

When asked “ultimately, would you have been able to bring up your children as fluent Welsh speakers without the school”, 65% said “no”, 35% said “Possibly, but it would have been difficult”, NOBODY responded “Yes, easily”

Some parents had trialled other options, and dropped them. What we heard:

- Online tools, Saturday schools, Duolingo - none delivered fluency.
- Children resisted extra lessons or lost interest – it felt like a chore
- Parents couldn’t do it alone - especially in mixed-language homes.

But the most important difference? **Peers.**

- Children need to hear and use Welsh with other children, not just in lessons, but in the playground, at lunch, on trips, in jokes and games.
- That’s what **normalises the language** and makes it feel alive, not just academic.
- The school provides full **daily immersion**, which other options simply can’t.

“Only in a school environment with children of the same age would she appreciate Welsh as a living language.”

“Children need to be with other children and the Welsh language needs to be a daily part of life.”

“It is important that children speak naturally to other children - otherwise they just think it’s something academic or that adults speak.”

“The immersion in the language for almost all the time is what made them long-term fluent Welsh speakers.”

“We tried everything... but our child was losing the language. Moving them to YGLI changed everything.”

“Saturday school or online lessons don’t come close. You can’t learn a language fluently for one hour a week.”

These families are living adverts and ambassadors for Welsh language and culture

- We asked respondents “Have you ever told friends, colleagues, neighbours that your child(ren) speaks Welsh and attend/ed a Welsh-language school”, and **99%** say they’d told a lot of people. 87% say “I tell almost everyone / it comes up all the time” 12% “almost everyone/lots” of people.
- Between them, **just these 100 respondents have spread awareness to 30,000+ people.**
- The school sparks admiration and interest across London, from English families, other ethnic communities, and curious passers-by.

“People are always curious... many didn’t realise Welsh was even a living language.”

“Travelling on the tube on St David’s Day... we had many, many conversations over the years.”

It creates community - and community creates Welsh speakers

- **90%** of respondents say they’ve made lasting Welsh friendships through the school.
- It offers belonging, confidence, and identity - for children and parents alike.
- Without it, many say their children *wouldn’t be Welsh-speaking at all.*

“This is my Welsh family in London.”

“It’s the glue that holds us together - it changed our lives completely.”

“We’ve gone from a purely English-speaking home to a truly bilingual one.”

“Making friends with other Welsh families in London was crucial to motivating my children to speak Welsh naturally.”

“Being part of the YGLI community has flipped things - now I feel more involved with my Welshness than I did even when I was back in Wales.”

“It gave me a solid connection with the London Welsh community which has continued for years to the present day.”

We asked respondents to sum up what Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain meant to them in one sentence...

The responses paint a deeply emotional and consistent picture. Key themes include:

Language & Identity

- The school is seen as *essential* to preserving and passing on the Welsh language, culture, and identity - not just to children but across entire families and generations.
- Many say their children simply would not speak Welsh without it.

Family & Community

- Described repeatedly as "*a family*", "*lifeline*", "*extended family*", "*community*", and "*home from home*".
- The school offers a unique sense of belonging in a global city, helping Welsh families stay connected to their roots.

Education & Opportunity

- The education is consistently described as excellent - blending high academic standards with strong cultural values.
- It has given children confidence, bilingual fluency, and access to opportunities both in and beyond Wales.

A Cultural Beacon in London

- The school is widely viewed as the *beating heart* or *cultural hub* of the Welsh community in London - "a little piece of Wales in the capital."
- Its value reaches far beyond its small size - acting as a flag-bearer for Welsh language and identity in one of the most global cities in the world.

Diversity of Families

It's also important to say, these aren't all fluent Welsh-speaking families. Many don't speak Welsh at home. Some are mixed-language households, adoptive families, multicultural families. Parents from Cornwall, Spain, even Italy. And they all chose this school because they wanted to give their children the gift of Welsh - something they couldn't have done on their own.

This school proves that **Welsh isn't just for the Welsh of the Welsh** - it's for anyone who wants to be part of it.

In just a few days, over 100 individuals (past parent, current parent and past pupils) poured their hearts into telling us what this school means to them. The messages are consistent and clear:

- This school **creates new Welsh speakers**.
- It builds **fluency where nothing else works** - not even in homes that already speak Welsh.
- It gives families a reason to stay connected to Wales - and many return, ready to contribute.
- And it does all this while **normalising the Welsh language in London**, reaching tens of thousands of others as living ambassadors for Cymraeg.

Childcare funding at 9 months

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 26 Ionawr 2026
Petitions Committee | 26 January 2026

Reference: RS25/12887-5

Introduction

Petition Number: [P-06-1556](#)

Petition title: Childcare funding for working parents when their children are +9 months

Text of petition: Enable parents to return to work when their newborn children are +9 months. Currently there is no funding available until they are 3 years old.

Depending on eligibility, including age, there is a range of childcare support offered in Wales and funded by Welsh Government and local authorities. This includes the Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start Childcare and the provision of 'early years education'.

Flying Start Childcare is the only one of these available to children aged 2. This is delivered by individual local authorities and has not yet been fully rolled out to give an offer to all 2 years olds across Wales.

The Minister's paper in response to this petition says:

*We remain committed to our Programme for Government commitment following the last Senedd elections in 2021- to "Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds. However, as you will know, during the period of the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru **it was accepted***



that this would not be completed in this Senedd term. [bold is our emphasis]

Welsh Government has a webpage about [help with paying for childcare](#). Each local authority must have a free local [Family Information Service](#) to help and advise parents on childcare options in its area.

1. Welsh Government action

1.1. Flying Start childcare for two-year-olds

In its [Co-operation Agreement](#) with Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Government announced its intention to extend Flying Start childcare to ‘deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to **include all 2-year-olds in Wales**’. How this has been delivered to date varies by local authority.

The Minister’s response to this petition says:

Our Flying Start programme provides fully funded quality childcare for parents of all eligible two-year-olds for two-and-a-half hours a day, five days a week for 39 weeks a year. Flying Start uses more frequent, shorter sessions of childcare for younger children as the evidence indicates this is most effective, especially for disadvantaged children. [...] The first two local authorities – Merthyr and Swansea – have now announced that they have been able to make a Flying Start childcare offer to all two year olds.

Flying Start Childcare differs from the full [Flying Start programme](#), the latter of which has three other elements and is available within defined geographical areas.

1.2. Childcare Offer for Wales

The Welsh Government’s [Childcare Offer for Wales](#) gives an **entitlement** of 30 hours a week for 48 weeks per year to **children age 3 and 4** of eligible working parents and some parents in education or training. The 30 hours a week is made up of:

- at least 10 hours of early years education (see below); and
- up to 20 hours of childcare.

Depending on the providers, parents can use funded childcare hours at any time during holiday weeks, night or day, including at weekends.

1.3. Ten hours early years education

All local authorities have a [legal duty](#) to offer and provide free 'sufficient nursery education for all children in their area from **the first term after their third birthday** until the September after their fourth birthday'. To deliver this duty, local authorities [must offer](#) a minimum of 10 hours for 39 weeks for all children regardless of their parents' employment status. If children are entitled to the Childcare Offer (see above) then this early years entitlement is topped up to make 30 hours.

1.4. UK-wide childcare support / position in England

The UK Government also provides some financial support that parents in Wales can access, depending on eligibility. For working parents this is usually the [Tax-free childcare scheme](#). The UK Government's [childcare calculator](#) is a tool for parents to check what help they could get with childcare costs.

[Comparisons are often made](#) between the free childcare offers in Wales and England. This has increased [following a commitment by the previous UK Government](#) in 2023 to provide free childcare to children of eligible working parents from the age of 9 months by 2025. This House of Commons Library briefing provides further detail: [Expanding government-funded childcare in England](#).

The Minister's paper, in response to this petition, says:

In terms of England's childcare expansion there are reports that rapid expansion without sufficient workforce and infrastructure can lead to shortages of places in some areas and quality concerns – we are determined to avoid that. Our phased approach reflects what we've learned about the importance of sustainability and quality as part of any planned expansion.

2. Welsh Parliament action

The Equality and Social Justice Committee has undertaken [scrutiny of childcare provision](#) during this Sixth Senedd publishing two reports.

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

- [Their Future: Our Priority? 2024](#)

During the Sixth Senedd, the Petitions Committee has considered a number of petitions about childcare including:

- [Match the new childcare offer in England of 15 hours for 2 year old's from April 2024](#)
- [Offer Welsh working parents the same financial support for childcare as England](#)
- [Create, fund and sustain sufficient affordable nursery and childcare places for all working parents](#)

It also rejected the following petitions as there was already a petition about this issue when these petitions were submitted:

- [Match the new childcare offer in England of 15 hours for children aged 2](#)
- [Give Welsh Parents Fair Childcare: Extend Free Hours from 9 Months, Not Just Age 3](#)
- [Free 30 hours weekly child care to 9 months child also to Welsh working parents](#)

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-06-1556
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00681/25

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

09 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter seeking my views on Petition P-06-1556 Childcare funding for working parents when their children are +9 month from Kathryn Parry.

We recognise childcare costs can be a significant expense, especially alongside the rising cost of living. Our Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) approach in Wales places the child and child development at the heart of everything we do. We know investing in ECPLC can have a positive impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children. It can also potentially improve educational attainment and a child's longer-term contribution to society.

The Welsh Government continues to invest heavily in childcare and early years provision. We are making an additional £50m available in 2025-26, taking the total budget to more than £150m to sustain and grow high-quality childcare in Wales. We have deliberately focused our resources on our most disadvantaged communities in the first instance and worked out from them in order of disadvantage.

Our Flying Start programme provides fully funded quality childcare for parents of all eligible two -year-olds for two-and-a-half hours a day, five days a week for 39 weeks a year. Flying Start uses more frequent, shorter sessions of childcare for younger children as the evidence indicates this is most effective, especially for disadvantaged children. Parents are able to supplement these hours if they need additional childcare provision. The first two local authorities – Merthyr and Swansea – have now announced that they have been able to make a Flying Start childcare offer to all two year olds.

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

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

We remain committed to our Programme for Government commitment following the last Senedd elections in 2021- to "Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds. However, as you will know, during the period of the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru it was accepted that this would not be completed in this Senedd term. We are keen to learn lessons, including from other countries experiences, when shaping our own policies. In terms of England's childcare expansion there are reports that rapid expansion without sufficient workforce and infrastructure can lead to shortages of places in some areas and quality concerns – we are determined to avoid that. Our phased approach reflects what we've learned about the importance of sustainability and quality as part of any planned expansion.

During 2023–24 and 2024–25, we invested £46 million to expand Flying Start, supporting over 13,400 children and families across Wales, exceeding our targets. Over 10,000 children have taken up a Flying Start childcare place, with take-up rates above 80% in 2024-25.

Phase 3 of the expansion began in April 2025, supported by an additional £25 million as part of a wider £50 million investment in childcare for 2025–26. This brings the total childcare budget to over £150 million and will enable thousands more children to benefit, while ensuring the sector has the workforce and capacity to deliver provision sustainably. 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.

As you will be aware that we also provide the Childcare Offer for three and four year olds. This is more generous than the equivalent offer in England, covering 48 weeks of the year rather than 38 and applying to parents in education and training as well as those in work. You will also be aware that all government policies are kept under review for consideration in the next electoral cycle and all parties are currently developing offers for the next Senedd term.

I hope the Petition Committee find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

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

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

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

P-06-1566: Welsh Government must legislate for full regard to Local Nature Reserves including Cosmeston LNR

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 26 Ionawr 2026
Petitions Committee | 26 January 2026

Reference: SR25/12887-3

Introduction

Petition Number: [P-06-1566](#)

Petition title: Welsh Government must legislate for full regard to Local Nature Reserves including Cosmeston LNR.

Text of petition: Although statutory, LNRs are hardly recognised in nature recovery plans and Wales' biodiversity framework. Welsh Government must empower LNR friends' and wildlife groups by strengthening duties on public authorities to take them into account within the provisions of the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill. Parts of Cosmeston LNR are SSSI, but neither NRW nor the Council have to review designated features, update designations, or produce a management plan.

The 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act protects species, habitats, and nesting sites within LNRs. The Vale Council aim to profit from Cosmeston LNR via commercial water-park activities which clash with the nature conservation and public enjoyment purpose. In not assessing potential impacts on the wildlife and habitats when inviting bids for water-based recreation in 2021 and



Aquapark this year, the council appeared to breach its LNR duty. General duties for biodiversity set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and for nature recovery (NRAP 2015) carry no bite. The 1981 Act carries a duty to prevent activities disturbing habitats of designated water voles and Cetti's warbler. When the Cetti's started nesting near the aquapark, the council ignored the required 'buffer zone'. The new Bill should include a clearly defined process for public challenge of official bodies when drawing up management plans, submitting funding bids, and assessing developments in LNRs under planning law.

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

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designations by local authorities under the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949* and their management and protection are primarily the responsibility of the local authority. LNRs are designated for natural features that are of special interest to the local area.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) estimates there are around 100 LNRs in Wales. Their distribution can be seen on DataMapWales.

2. Welsh Government action

2.1. Planning policy

In terms of the planning system, the Welsh Government classes LNRs as “non-statutory” nature designations. This means that they are subject to a different approach in planning policy to “statutory” designations (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest) which have greater protection.

Designation	Statutorily and Non Statutorily Protected Sites	Interaction with Step-wise Approach
Special Area of Conservation	Statutory	Avoid
Special Protection Area	Statutory	
Ramsar sites	Statutory	
Site of Special Scientific Interest	Statutory	
National Nature Reserve	Statutory	
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve	Non-Statutory	Apply Step-wise Approach to determine
UNESCO Geoparks	Non-Statutory	
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	Non-Statutory	
Local Nature Reserve	Non-Statutory	
Local Wildlife Sites	Non-Statutory	
Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS)	Non-Statutory	
Potential National Natural Resources Areas (Future Wales)	Development Plan	
Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs) / Nature Network Maps (NRW)	Area Statements/ Green Infrastructure Assessments	

Source: Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, Figure 13, page 154).

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (section 6.4) requires Planning authorities to follow a “step-wise approach” to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Development may be considered in non-statutory designations, e.g. LNRs, subject to this approach.

In contrast, PPW states that development proposals in statutory designated sites must be avoided altogether, in line with the first step of the step-wise approach.

PPW goes on to state that:

Although non-statutory designations do not have a statutory process for their protection ... they should be given protection in development plans and the development management process.

...

Before authorising development likely to damage a local wildlife designation, planning authorities should give notice of the proposed operation to the local authority Ecologist and third sector environmental organisations. In all cases a written opinion must be secured from the local authority Ecologist.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5, on nature conservation and planning, aims to protect features of an LNR through including them as a material consideration in planning decisions (section 5.5.1). Developers are required to avoid harm to the features of these sites where possible.

2.2. Sites of Special Scientific Interest

The petition notes that there is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the LNR. SSSIs are recognised for their important wildlife and natural features (covering land, sea and freshwater) and are protected under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

NRW is responsible for designating sites as SSSIs. NRW also directly manages SSSIs on land it has responsibility for, and advises other landowners/occupiers on sites it does not manage directly. As stated above, SSSIs have certain protections in planning policy.

According to a [2020 baseline assessment](#) by NRW, the condition of 52% of SSSI features was unknown, 20% had features in favourable condition and 28% in unfavourable condition.

2.3. Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Section 6 of the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) includes a general 'biodiversity duty' requiring public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. The intention is that public authorities should embed the consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into their day to day activities. To comply with the duty, public authorities must prepare and publish a plan setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience, and report on their work every three years.

2.4. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) includes general laws to protect wildlife such as prohibiting (without a licence) the killing or taking of wild birds, or the destruction of their eggs or nest, while that nest is in use or being built.

2.5. Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill

[Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill](#) is currently passing through the Senedd. If passed it aims to:

- embed [environmental principles](#) into law to underpin future policy decision-making;
- establish an [environmental governance body](#) (the Office of Environmental Governance Wales – OEGW) which would hold public authorities to account on environmental law; and
- introduce a statutory framework for [legally binding biodiversity targets](#).

The Bill does not create new duties specific to LNRs. Its provisions aim to reinforce the requirement for public bodies to consider biodiversity in decision-making and work towards biodiversity targets e.g. as part of their section 6 biodiversity duty (above).

The OEGW would provide a route for complaints and enforcement where public authorities fail to comply with environmental law. With regards to this petition, anyone concerned that the public authority was not complying with its legal

environmental duties could make representations to the OEGW which would have powers to ensure compliance (such as via compliance notices, with escalation to the High Court as a possible option).

2.6. Nature Recovery Action Plan

The petition mentions the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales (NRAP) (2021), which is the Welsh Government's biodiversity strategy.

While the NRAP refers to restoring and maintaining the Protected Site network, this is in relation to sites designated historically under the EU's Natura 2000 network, which does not include LNRs. However the NRAP does aim to restore and create habitat outside protected sites "to build nature networks and mosaics".

Welsh Government's intention is for the section 6 biodiversity plan, augmented by the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, to replace the current NRAP. However, as mentioned, the Bill does not include specific provision for LNRs.

2.7. Biodiversity Deep Dive

The Welsh Government's 2022 Biodiversity Deep Dive (which makes recommendations to reaching the global target to protect 30% of land, freshwater and sea by 2030 - '30 by 30') includes a recommendation on LNRs:

Identifying ways to maximise the role of Local Nature Reserves and other habitats not under statutory designation, such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, to deliver for the 30 by 30.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee (CCEI) undertook an inquiry into biodiversity, reporting in July 2024 on halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030. It explored the management of protected sites in the context of the global '30 by 30' target, but didn't specifically address the status of LNRs.

CCEI has been the principle committee scrutinising the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill. Its Stage 1 report and Stage 2 amendments did not specifically consider the status of LNRs, rather the provisions around environmental principles, the governance body and biodiversity targets.

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-06-1566
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/02081/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

27 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 7 November regarding Petition P-06-1566 on Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), including Cosmeston LNR.

The Welsh Government recognises the important role that LNRs play in supporting biodiversity and providing opportunities for public engagement with nature. LNRs are designations by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and their management and protection are primarily the responsibility of the local authority.

The planning system has a key responsibility in securing positive biodiversity outcomes. [Planning policy Wales | GOV.WALES](#) 12 (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and it is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. PPW sets out a strong framework for the protection of non-statutory nature designations, such as Local Nature Reserves.

Planning policy states at paragraph 6.4.31 that, “although non-statutory designations do not have a statutory process for their protection, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Regionally Importance Geodiversity Sites make a vital contribution to delivering an ecological network for biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, and they should be given protection in development plans and the development management process. Non-statutory sites can form the core of a vital network of threatened habitats, play an essential role in protecting, maintaining, connecting and restoring biodiversity and contribute to nature recovery and a net benefit for biodiversity. Before authorising development likely to damage a local wildlife designation, planning authorities should give notice of the proposed operation to the local authority Ecologist and third sector environmental organisations. In all cases a written opinion must be secured from the local authority Ecologist.”

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

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

We expect all public bodies to comply with their statutory duties under existing legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

We already have in place the section 6 biodiversity duty with its overarching aim of integrating biodiversity considerations into authorities' functions. This requires public authorities who operate in Wales to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems throughout their functions and activities.

Also, the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill will strengthen the framework for biodiversity recovery across Wales. The Bill will also help to improve the implementation of the section 6 biodiversity duty through the introduction of legally binding targets and governance arrangements. While the Bill does not create new duties specific to LNRs, its provisions will reinforce the requirement for public bodies to consider biodiversity in decision-making and planning processes. The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill is a crucial piece of legislation that will empower us to safeguard our environment and ensure a sustainable future for Wales.

The establishment of the Office of Environmental Governance Wales (OEGW) will provide a route for complaints and enforcement where public authorities fail to comply with environmental law.

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,



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-06-1563 Abandon the plan to make Wales a "nation of sanctuary"

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 26 Ionawr 2026
Petitions Committee | 26 January 2026

Reference: RS25/12887/1

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1563

Petition title: Abandon the plan to make Wales a "nation of sanctuary"

Text of petition: The current climate regarding immigration is that it is completely out of control and in dire need of attention. The people of Wales deserve a parliament that speaks and acts for them and their best interests. More focus should be put on improving the nation for the people of Wales and put Welsh nationals first. Wales is one of the leading nations in the UK when it comes to poverty and homelessness, these issues should be addressed before we invite the world to our shores.

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

1.1. International responsibilities

The UK has international legal responsibilities to protect refugees. Alongside 148 other countries, the UK is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a global treaty overseen by the United Nations. The core principle of the Refugee Convention is 'non-refoulement', which means that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.

The UK is also party to other treaties which protect refugees, such as the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR).

The Welsh Government is required by the devolution settlement to comply with these obligations. In 2019, the Welsh Government declared that Wales would become the world's first 'nation of sanctuary'. The plan explains how it will ensure Wales fulfils its international obligations and has been endorsed by the United Nations.

1.2. UK Government support for refugees and asylum seekers

According to the Refugee Convention 1951, a refugee is:

a person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

An asylum seeker is:

a person who has crossed an international border in search of protection, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been decided. An asylum seeker is therefore someone who has arrived in a country and asked for asylum. Until they receive a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee, they are known as an asylum seeker.

In the UK, asylum seekers do not have the same rights as a refugee or a British citizen. For example, people seeking asylum aren't allowed to work or claim benefits. The UK Government provides asylum seekers with housing, financial support and access to services if they meet the eligibility requirements (that they are homeless or do not have money to buy food). Where an application for asylum

has been refused a person may be eligible for short-term support under section 4(2) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Asylum accommodation is provided on a 'no choice' basis so asylum seekers cannot choose where in the UK they live. Asylum seekers in receipt of support will be placed in temporary accommodation which is managed by providers on behalf of the Home Office.

2. Welsh Government action

Immigration is a reserved matter and as such the Welsh Government has had little involvement in the development of policies and action taken at a UK level. In the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice to the Petitions Committee, she states the Welsh Government "does not have the power to implement or stop UK-wide policies on this issue" and does not "decide on who is placed in Wales".

The Welsh Government is however responsible for the broad range of policies that support the integration of migrants including health and social care, housing, education, employment and is a key player in managing the impacts of migration and ensuring communities are cohesive. The Cabinet Secretary states that the Welsh Government has committed to welcoming a proportionate share of people share of people seeking sanctuary in the UK, the equivalent of up to 5% of all arrivals and will support them to help them settle, access services and integrate into their communities ensuring Wales "remains a safe, welcoming and cohesive nation".

In 2019, the Welsh Government announced it would become the world's first nation of sanctuary. This was in response to a 2016 inquiry by the Fifth Senedd's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee into refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.

The Welsh Government's impact assessment summarises how the policy: seeks to remove barriers to asylum seekers accessing services, improve employability support for refugees, improve integration and knowledge of rights for refugees and asylum seekers and mitigate destitution, mental ill health and homelessness.

The Plan has been updated as part of the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) (2024) and [sets out 10 principles](#) rather than specific actions. Outlining the Welsh Government key priorities in 2024 to 2025, it states:

The focus will be on preventing the most harmful impacts experienced by sanctuary seekers, such as homelessness, destitution, exploitation, unemployment, and mental ill-health.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In March 2022 the [Petitions Committee considered](#) a petition to hold a referendum on Wales becoming a nation of sanctuary. In its response [the Welsh Government said](#) the Nation of Sanctuary Plan was developed through “[a three month open consultation](#)” and [the summary of responses](#) “[...] demonstrate substantial support for the draft Nation of Sanctuary proposals.”

Concluding it’s consideration the Committee “noted that a consultation has already taken place on the Nation of Sanctuary plan which was widely supported. Therefore it agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition” and:

[...] reiterated the heartfelt offers of support from the people of Wales standing in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and the strong support expressed by Members of the Senedd, reinforcing how Wales wishes to welcome asylum seekers and refugees.

Over recent months both the [Welsh Conservatives](#) and [Reform UK](#) have called on the Welsh Government to scrap the Nation of Sanctuary plan on the basis that funding public services, which meets the needs of Welsh citizens, should be prioritised over non-devolved areas.

In January 2025 Welsh Conservative MS, Andrew RT Davies submitted a [written question](#) regarding the total cost to date of the Nation of Sanctuary plan. In response on 20 January 2025 the [Welsh Government stated that](#) the total net spend (expenditure minus income from external sources) since 2019 was £62,83. It explains that approximately £51m of this net spend is related to the Ukraine humanitarian response work.

Welsh Conservative Senedd Members have since submitted a number of written questions requesting further information on the total cost of the Nation of Sanctuary Plan and details on how spending has been allocated. [Providing an](#)

update on 6 November 2025, the Welsh Government stated that, up to the end of the financial year to March 2025, the total figure is £63.87m. It explained that:

Of this updated figure the total Welsh Government expenditure on the Ukraine response (since 2022) is £58.22m which represents 91% of the total Welsh Government expenditure on Nation of Sanctuary. The total non-Ukraine spend was £5.65m over the six years which represents 9% of the total. The total amount of £63.87m continues to represent 0.05% of the Welsh Government's budget from 2019 to 2025.

In the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice to the Committee she states that the Welsh Government ensures the needs of Welsh citizens are addressed and continues to tackle poverty, reduce homelessness, and improve public services for all residents. She adds that the Welsh Government is committed to "promoting inclusive communities where everyone can contribute meaningfully to society" and explains that:

This approach allows us to balance providing support to those who need sanctuary with ensuring that local communities are strengthened and that residents' needs are prioritised within our devolved responsibilities.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1563
Our ref JH-/01039/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

22 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1563, submitted by Luke Thomas and supported by signatories on the Senedd petitions website. This reply is provided to the Petitions Committee as the formal response of the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of addressing the concerns of Welsh citizens and communities. It is important to be clear that immigration and asylum policy are reserved matters, determined by the UK Government. The Welsh Government does not have the power to implement or stop UK-wide policies on this issue.

The Welsh Government does not decide on how many people seeking sanctuary in the UK are placed in Wales – nor does it decide on who is placed in Wales. This has always been a decision for the UK Government alone. We have committed to welcoming our proportionate share of people seeking sanctuary in the UK – this is the equivalent of up to 5% of all arrivals.

Within our devolved powers, the Welsh Government continues to work to ensure that Wales remains a safe, welcoming, and cohesive nation. We will support people who come to Wales, helping them settle, access services, and integrate successfully into their communities. At the same time, we continue to tackle poverty, reduce homelessness, and improve public services for all residents, ensuring that the needs of Welsh citizens are addressed alongside our wider commitments.

The Welsh Government is committed to promoting inclusive communities where everyone can contribute meaningfully to society. This approach allows us to balance providing support to those who need sanctuary with ensuring that local communities are strengthened and that residents' needs are prioritised within our devolved responsibilities.

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

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

In 2016, the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee conducted an [inquiry](#) into refugees and asylum seekers and recommended that the Welsh Government take steps to make Wales a Nation of Sanctuary. As a direct result of that inquiry, we published the Nation of Sanctuary Plan in 2019, which was subsequently updated as part of the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) (2024).

Wales being a Nation of Sanctuary means supporting those who, fleeing persecution and war, arrive here to rebuild their lives. We assist them to integrate into Welsh life and contribute positively to our nation. We believe this compassionate response gives people seeking sanctuary the best start possible and also helps local services and communities too.

I am proud of our vision of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary, and proud of the way we work in partnership with local authorities, health boards, third sector partners and communities to make this vision a reality across Wales. I am also proud of our many communities, towns, cities, schools and universities who wish to become places of sanctuary and welcome for those seeking sanctuary in Wales. At a time of global instability and humanitarian crises, it is more important than ever that we uphold our values of compassion, welcome and community.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

P-06-1567 Condemn and investigate far-right group 'White Vanguard' in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 26 Ionawr 2026
Petitions Committee | 26 January 2026

Reference: RS26/12887/2

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1567

Petition title: Condemn and investigate far-right group 'White Vanguard' in Wales

Text of petition: We call on the Welsh Government to condemn and take action against White Vanguard, whose members have joined weekly demonstrations outside the Holiday Inn Express in Rhoose, which is housing Afghan families who are here legally under a Government resettlement scheme.

While proscribing extremist groups is a UK Home Office matter, we call on the Welsh Government to:

- Urge the UK Government to investigate and proscribe White Vanguard
- Publicly condemn neo-Nazi activity in Wales
- Work with South Wales Police and councils to address far-right intimidation
- Support communities through anti-racism and safeguarding initiatives

We urge the Senedd to show that hate has no place in Wales.

This petition is submitted by The Vale for Palestine, a community group based in the Vale of Glamorgan.



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

1.1. White Vanguard

The group White Vanguard states they:

are a group of National Socialist activists committed to exercising our rights to protest and the use of freedom of expression within the bounds of United Kingdom law.

In June 2025 the organisation HOPE not Hate (whose work focuses on the organised far right) explained the group had officially launched in March and emerged out of Youth Alliance (YA), which they report are “a highly antisemitic groupuscule that both founded and folded last year”.

The petitioner states that the White Vanguard group “displays antisemitic slogans, performs Nazi salutes, and spreads racist conspiracy theories, threatening community safety and cohesion”.

They go onto say:

The continued racist demonstrations in Rhoose have caused fear among residents and community groups. The loud and abusive protests threaten Afghan families, people of all backgrounds, and those welcoming refugees. Demonstrators have performed Nazi salutes, chanted vile abuse, and endangered public safety. The threat has grown with the arrival of White Vanguard, whose masked members carried Nazi symbols and antisemitic slogans.

On 31 October 2025 White Vanguard submitted its own petition which calls on the Welsh Government “to condemn and take action against ‘Antifa’ (a left-wing anti-fascist and anti-racist political movement)”. The petition was rejected as it did not collect the required 250 signatures to be referred to the Petitions Committee.

1.2. The Terrorism Act 2000

Under the Terrorism Act 2000 the UK Government can proscribe organisations that it considers engage in or promote terrorism. For the purposes of the act, this means that the organisation:

- commits or participates in acts of terrorism

- prepares for terrorism, promotes or encourages terrorism (including the unlawful glorification of terrorism), or
- is otherwise concerned in terrorism.

When an organisation is proscribed, it becomes a criminal offence to belong to it or to support it. Once an organisation has been deemed to merit proscription, it will be proscribed throughout the whole of the UK.

Section 121 of the Act defines an “organisation” as any association or combination of persons. As of December 2025 there were 84 international terrorist groups proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000 and 14 organisations in Northern Ireland proscribed under previous legislation.

Section 3 of the Act enables the Secretary of State to make orders adding or removing organisations from the list in Schedule 2 or amending the Schedule in some other way. These orders are subject to the affirmative procedure and therefore require the approval of both Houses of Parliament - there is no role for the devolved legislatures in this process. The most recent proscription orders concerned Palestine Action, Maniacs Murder Cult and Russian Imperial Movement.

In the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice to the Committee, Jane Hutt MS reiterates the position, that the Welsh Government:

will always support peaceful protest within the law but we will not let divisive voices and extremism undermine the values that hold us together. We continue to consistently voice of our strong and absolute opposition to hate in all its forms, as I did during the recent Hate Hurts Wales Oral Statement on 14 October.

The Cabinet Secretary reasserts the petitioner’s statement that the proscription of groups under the Terrorism Act 2000 is not a Welsh Government responsibility. She adds:

“Our views on whether certain groups should or should not be proscribed is not a relevant factor in how the Home Secretary makes these decisions”.

Responding to the allegations made by the petitioner in relation to the behaviour of some of the protesters at Rhoose, the Cabinet Secretary encourages them to submit this evidence to the police as the appropriate agency.

1.3. Protest and police powers

An individual's right to freedom of expression and assembly are protected by Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which is enshrined in UK law. These rights are not absolute, therefore the UK Government has legislated to restrict the right of protest to maintain public order to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

The Public Order Act 2023 established a number of criminal offences relating to protests, including obstructing major transport works and interfering with key national infrastructure. There are several other criminal offences that could also apply to a person's conduct during a protest, which are not directly related to the act of protesting, including causing public nuisance.

If it becomes law, the Crime and Policing Bill will introduce further measures aimed at restricting certain behaviours at protests, including creating new offences of misusing flares and fireworks, climbing on war memorials and seeking to avoid criminal liability by concealing their identity using face coverings.

In October 2025, the UK Government announced it would introduce legislation to allow the police to place conditions on "repeat protests" that have a "cumulative impact" of disruption.

The UK Government also launched a review of protest legislation in December 2025 "to test whether the law remains fit for purpose, assess whether thresholds and safeguards are right and effective, and recommend reforms that improve consistency, protect rights and reassure affected communities." A report is expected in February 2026.

Asked about the right to protest, in July 2025, the First Minister said:

Obviously, there has to be a line in terms of breaking the law and on stirring up racial hatred. So, we've just got to be very clear on that, but, as far as I'm concerned, the right to protest is a sacred right in relation to how we do it in Wales, and these are actually within articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which assures people of the right to be able to express themselves in Wales.

In the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, she reasserts support for peaceful protests but adds that divisive voices and extremism should not undermine the "values that hold us together".

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has taken a number of actions to support community cohesion through anti-racism and safeguarding initiatives. These were highlighted by the First Minister in September 2025 when asked what steps the Welsh Government is taking to counter far-right extremism:

We'll never tolerate hate in Wales. That's why the Welsh Labour Government has invested £1.6m in our Community Cohesion Programme. We've supported 7,000 hate crime victims. We're running our Hate Hurts campaign this autumn and we're working with schools and police to stop extremism at its root. While Reform thrives on division, Welsh Labour brings people together because in Wales we choose unity, and we're proud to be a nation where everyone belongs.

The Welsh Government's major intervention for supporting cohesion is the Community Cohesion Programme, established in 2009. It operates across all 22 local authorities in Wales and is divided into eight 'cohesion regions' which provides a pan-Wales framework to respond to the needs of local communities.

In 2019, with additional funding, the Cohesion Teams expanded to deliver a range of activities, including monitoring community tensions and fostering good relationships. Each year the Welsh Government co-produces a regional workplan with local government and monitors progress quarterly. In her correspondence, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice states that as a result of a 25% funding uplift this year, the programme has received £1.6 million, adding that "it is a key mechanism for helping Welsh Government and local authorities to monitor and mitigate tensions within communities across Wales".

In 2021 the Welsh launched the Hate Hurts Wales campaign which aims to raise awareness of the impact of hate crime on victims from ethnic minority communities. This campaign will address victims, perpetrators and bystanders through various materials. Campaign materials will be developed with those who have been affected by racist hate crime. In February 2023, the Welsh Government relaunched the Hate Hurts Wales campaign, with media activities throughout the year aiming to empower victims and witnesses to report hate crimes. The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice states that the Welsh Government increased the budget for the campaign by more than 80% in 2025-26 with a focus on helping to ensure victims learn about the support available.

The Welsh Government published its [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#) (ArWAP) in June 2022. The plan sets out the vision of a Wales which is 'anti-racist by 2030' and includes actions to tackle racism and make 'meaningful and measurable changes' to the lives of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The Plan includes a goal to

To ensure that Wales continues to strive to be an anti-racist country and so is a safe place to live, by eliminating hateful attitudes and supporting victims of racially motivated hate crime.

In the update of the ArWAP in 2024 the Welsh Government reaffirmed its commitment to tackling hate crime which they say:

[...] includes preventative work, provision of support for victims, and awareness-raising activities, via the funding and delivery of a Wales Hate Support Centre, A Hate Hurts Wales campaign, and Welsh Government's Community Cohesion Programme.

To deliver the hate and cohesion commitments in the Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales the Welsh Government established a [Hate and Community Tension Board](#) which meets 4 times a year. [Membership includes representatives from South Wales Police and Welsh Government.](#) In correspondence to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary reaffirms the commitment to create an anti-racist Wales by 2030 and to the actions set out in the Plan.

3. Welsh Parliament action

Between March 2023 and February 2024, the Equality and Social Justice Committee held [an inquiry into the implementation of the ArWAP](#) and concluded further work is needed if the Welsh Government is to achieve its vision of an anti-racist Wales. Organisations who shared their views with the Committee endorsed the Plan's vision and comprehensive scope, but most raised concerns about the implementation and rate of progress. The refreshed strategy reflects some of the Committee's recommendations, particularly around the need to strengthen overall leadership of the plan.

In response to rising tensions within communities in Wales and elsewhere in the UK, the Equality and Social Justice Committee held [an inquiry into social cohesion](#) in 2025. The Committee heard evidence from Dame Khan (a former UK Government Adviser) who referred to an "evolving and accelerating extremism landscape".

The Committee's report, Co-operation over Conflict: Wales Must Act, highlights growing challenges to social cohesion and calls for urgent, coordinated action. It recommended establishing an Expert Group on Social Cohesion with representatives from local government, police, cohesion teams, the third sector and the Strategic Migration Partnership to devise a set of immediate, medium and long-term actions to address these challenges.

In response to the increasing threats to social cohesion from the rise of extremist views and activities, the Committee recommended the Expert Group should carry out work to pinpoint the challenges this poses for Wales and identify the best ways to tackle far-right activities. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation immediately and established an Expert Group chaired by Gaynor Legall. The group met on 20 November 2025 and its recommendations are expected to be finalised by March 2026.

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

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1567
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00977/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

1 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November regarding the petition submitted by the community organisation, the Vale for Palestine.

The allegations about the behaviour of some of the protestors in Rhose are concerning and we would encourage the petitioners to submit any evidence to the Police, as the appropriate agency. We will always support peaceful protest within the law but we will not let divisive voices and extremism undermine the values that hold us together. We continue to consistently voice of our strong and absolute opposition to hate in all its forms, as I did during the recent Hate Hurts Wales Oral Statement on 14 October.

As the petition makes clear, the proscription of groups is not a Welsh Government responsibility. Our views on whether certain groups should or should not be proscribed is not a relevant factor in how the Home Secretary makes these decisions. It would also not be appropriate for Welsh Government to 'investigate' the actions of extremist groups. Policing and criminal justice responses are outside of our responsibilities.

Nevertheless, Welsh Government is delivering a range of actions to address hate and prejudice in Wales, working with local authorities, police and other stakeholders to monitor and mitigate community tensions, and reassuring communities when necessary. We also continue to support communities through anti-racism initiatives, and we remain firmly committed to creating an anti-racist Wales by 2030, with our Anti-racist Wales Action Plan setting out a range of goals to deliver meaningful change.

Our Hate Hurts Wales campaign highlights to perpetrators, or potential perpetrators, the hugely negative impact of their actions on both the victim and their own lives, as well as highlighting the importance of bystanders for securing a positive outcome. We have increased the Hate Hurts Wales budget by more than 80% in 2025-26 to help us to ensure victims learn about the support available, particularly in the context of increasing hateful rhetoric.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1SN

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0300 0604400

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

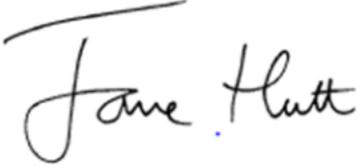
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

We have provided a 25% funding uplift to our Community Cohesion Programme this year, taking it to £1.6m across eight local government regional teams. The teams foster good relations between and within communities across the whole of Wales. The Programme acts as a conduit to support participation and inclusion of communities in local decision-making and policies. The Programme is a key mechanism for helping Welsh Government and local authorities to monitor and mitigate tensions within communities across Wales.

I hope this information assists the Committee in its formal consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jane Hutt AS/MS

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

P-06-1567 Condemn and investigate far-right group 'White Vanguard' in Wales Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 12 January 2026

Dear Petitions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond further in advance of the Committee's consideration of Petition P-06-1567.

I am writing to provide additional relevant information and to clarify an important point arising from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice's correspondence.

Since the petition was submitted, White Vanguard has reportedly experienced an internal split. However, there is now credible information suggesting that elements of the group are planning to "re-launch" later this month. In addition, some former members are understood to have aligned themselves with other ultra-extremist organisations, including Aryan Front. This pattern of fragmentation, re-formation and migration between groups is well recognised within far-right movements and does not indicate disengagement or reduced risk.

I would also like to note some disappointment at the recommendation that petitioners submit evidence to the police, as this has already been done. I am aware of at least one ongoing police investigation relating to incidents referenced in the petition. Furthermore, several of the most concerning incidents — including the public display of overtly fascist banners and the chanting of Nazi slogans — took place in the presence of police officers, without any immediate intervention.

This context is central to the concerns raised by the petition. The issue is not a failure to report, but uncertainty about enforcement thresholds, operational decision-making, and accountability when extremist behaviour occurs openly and in full view of authorities. For many in the community, the lack of visible action has been deeply unsettling and has undermined confidence that such behaviour will be robustly challenged.

The petition was therefore never solely about the existence of a single named organisation, but about:

- the public expression of extremist and Nazi ideology in Wales;
- the response — or lack thereof — at the time those incidents occurred; and
- the wider impact on community safety, cohesion and trust when such conduct appears to go unchallenged.

The prospect of a re-launch of White Vanguard, alongside the movement of individuals into other extremist formations, reinforces the need for scrutiny of how far-right activity is monitored in Wales, particularly during periods of instability when groups may become harder to track.

I would welcome the Committee's consideration of whether this petition could assist in:

- seeking further clarification or evidence from relevant policing bodies;
- examining how far-right activity, including splintering and re-branding, is assessed and monitored in Wales;
- clarifying the guidance and thresholds applied to overtly fascist or Nazi behaviour in public spaces; and
- identifying any steps Welsh Government can take, within its devolved responsibilities, to strengthen accountability, community reassurance and public confidence.

I hope this additional information is helpful to the Committee, particularly given the immediacy of recent developments.

Yours sincerely,

Agenda Item 3.1

P-06-1500 Neath Port Talbot UNISON needs additional Funding for NPT Council

This petition was submitted by Mark Fisher, having collected a total of 355 signatures.

Text of petition:

Neath Port Talbot UNISON is requesting a much needed injection of funding to Neath Port Talbot Council to protect services, protect jobs, keep communities safe. Without this extra funding Neath Port Talbot Council will have to make decisions on both statutory and non-statutory services for example, close Libraries, Youth Services, Public Amenities' also make staff compulsory redundant.

Additional information:

All additional funding allocated to Neath Port Talbot Council will support the disadvantaged people living in the area affected by the job losses in TATA Steel. The Trade Unions and Local Council are working in Social Partnership to protect the workforce and any extra revenue will assist partnership further in these terrible times.

Senedd Constituency and Region:

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

P-06-1500 Neath Port Talbot UNISON needs additional Funding for NPT Council -
Correspondence from Neath Port Talbot Council, 17 December 2025

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025 – 2026 – Neath Port Talbot

Neath Port Talbot Council was allocated £14,360,429 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for the 2025 – 26 Transition Year. UKSPF is a mix of capital and revenue, approximately 30% capital and 70% revenue and needs to be spent by 31st March 2026.

UKSPF Neath Port Talbot Delivery model:

To ensure a strategic, targeted and evidence based approach to delivering the UKSPF, Neath Port Talbot Council Cabinet agreed the following delivery approach on 26th February 2025. The delivery model is consistent with the South West Wales delivery model ensuring alignment with the region's strategic approach with local delivery:

Anchor Projects

Council led projects delivering strategic priorities. The approved anchor projects for Neath Port Talbot are:

- Community
- Place
- Business
- Employability
- Skills

Third party grant schemes

Three third party grant schemes were set up to ensure public, private, voluntary and community groups can access UKSPF funding via these grant schemes:

- Community Prosperity Fund (£1m)
- Place Prosperity Fund (£2m)
- Business Prosperity Fund (£1.25m)

All project delivery is aligned to the UKSPF Investment Priorities and Themes, which are: Communities & Place (Healthy, safe and inclusive communities / Thriving Places); Supporting Local Business (Support for Business); and People & Skills (Employability / Skills)

There are specific outputs and outcomes which need to be delivered by UKSPF projects. These outputs and outcomes are monitored and reported to UK government on a regular basis.

All funding has been allocated and projects are due to finish between December 2025 and March 2026.

The Neath Port Talbot Local Economic Partnership is the local partnership structure for the UKSPF in NPT.

**P-06-1500 Neath Port Talbot UNISON needs additional Funding for NPT Council -
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 14 January 2026**

To Petitions Committee

Thank you for your response , my only view is regarding the SPF funding allocation , currently we have over 67 jobs at risk due to the lack of funding allocation .

We ask the committee to consider the implications of the lack of SPF funding will have on our Special Projects that the communities count on also the potential 67 job losses .

Kind regards

Mark Fisher

Branch Secretary

UNISON Neath Port Talbot Branch

Agenda Item 3.2

P-06-1522 Convene a summit to accelerate sustainable and ethical investment by public sector pensions

This petition was submitted by Heather Bolton, having collected 578 signatures.

Text of petition

The eight Welsh Local Government pensions, managed through the Welsh Pension Partnership total assets worth £25 billion (31 March 2024) . Although there is a Responsible Investment policy, there are millions of pounds of assets in people and planet harming investments such as fossil fuels, deforestation, arms and companies complicit in human rights abuses.

Additional information

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to consider the long-term impact of their decisions and work towards improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

One of the well-being goals calls for Wales to be a 'Globally Responsible Nation'. Derek Walker, the future generations commissioner has called on Welsh public bodies to conduct an urgent review of public sector pension investments to ensure they are ethical and sustainable.

Presently Rachel Reeves the UK chancellor is proposing the amalgamation of all Welsh and English Local Government Pension pots into a small number of pooled funds and changing their governance. It is crucial that Welsh funds are directed towards ethical and sustainable investments that can practically benefit the people and environment of Wales rather than creating harm here and abroad. eg. sustainable social housing, regenerative forestry, local green energy, green transport, nature restoration.

Senedd Constituency and Region:

- Arfon
- North Wales



Dr Chris Llewelyn

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

Un Rhodfa'r Gamlas

Heol Dumballs

Caerdydd

CF10 5BF

Ffôn: 029 2046 8600

One Canal Parade

Dumballs Road

Cardiff

CF10 5BF

Tel: 029 2046 8600

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: AM/CT

Dyddiad / Date: 28 July 2025

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Jon Rae

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: 07979018007

Ebost / Email: jon.rae@wlga.gov.uk

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

By email

Dear Carolyn,

Petition P-06-1522 Convene a summit to accelerate sustainable and ethical investment by public sector pensions

The WLGA supports the ethical stewardship of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), although our role is peripheral to that of the pension funds themselves and the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP). As you are aware there are 8 pensions funds in Wales that are part of the LGPS and are administered by 8 local authorities. The host authority for WPP is Carmarthenshire County Council and the decision-making body is the Joint Governance Committee.

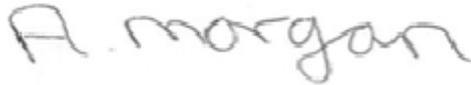
However, we do actively promote investment strategies which take account of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues alongside traditional financial analysis. In 2023 we convened a seminar in Cardiff to better understand these issues from a sector perspective, and this was chaired by Councillor Chris Weaver who is the Chair of the Cardiff and Vale Pension Fund committee. Councillor Weaver is also the WLGA representative on the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (SAB).

The SAB is set up under Section 7 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 110-113. Its purpose is to

encourage best practice, increase transparency and coordinate technical and standard issues. It works closely with the UK Government and other stakeholders including the Pensions Regulator.

There are changes to the pooling arrangements in hand that are driven by the UK Treasury, focusing on strengthening investment potential and governance. We will happily provide further information on that for Senedd members if you think that would be useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE
WLGA Leader



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1522
Ein cyf/Our ref JB/00672/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

20 August 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June about Petition P-06-1522 – “Convene a summit to accelerate sustainable and ethical investment by public sector pensions”. Occupational Pensions, including the Local Government Pension Scheme remain a reserved matter and decisions on the local government pension scheme are reserved to UK Government. I have no powers in relation to the scheme or its operation.

As the petition notes, the UK Government last year launched a review of pensions intended to boost investment, including investment in local economies and in the UK, increasing the size of investment funds and tackling waste and duplication in the pensions system. These are, of course, objectives which the Welsh Government fully supports. The Welsh Government has been a strong supporter of the creation of the Wales Pension Partnership (or “Welsh Pool”) which predated the wider pooling arrangements in the LGPS.

Following this consultation the UK Government introduced its Pensions Schemes Bill in June this year. This, if passed, will strengthen the ability of Local Government pensions funds to invest in infrastructure and for local and regional economic benefit. It will require the pensions administering authorities to work with corporate joint committees (CJCs) to identify potential investment opportunities suitable for pensions investment.

The petition rightly cites the Welsh Government’s landmark legislation the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 which should drive public bodies’ decision making. Our Programme for Government emphasises creating a “stronger, greener, fairer Wales” with a focus on tackling climate change and achieving Net Zero by 2050. There is clearly an important role here for pension and other investors to invest in climate positive actions and to support the Welsh economy. I hope that the Wales Pension Partnership will continue to develop its activities in line with these priorities.

I and my predecessors have discussed this with Leaders and Pension Authority Members. This has included discussion at the Local Government Partnership Council with elected Leaders when the Chair of the Wales Pension Partnership presented on the steps the Pool

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

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

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

was taking to increase opportunities to invest in climate positive investments and to take account of the risks posed by investing in fossil fuel related funds.

Subsequently, WLGA, together with Friends of the Earth, facilitated an event to further build on conversations across Wales on the decarbonising of pension funds. Elected Members and officers attended. The event was chaired by the then Chair of the Wales Pension Partnership Governance Committee and included guest speakers from the Good Economy, Leeds University Business School and the Swansea Pension Fund. These expert speakers shared their experience of moving towards a sustainable pension before plenary discussions on the challenges to decarbonising pensions and how to overcome these.

While discussions in this event acknowledged that the funds had to ensure they could meet the pension requirements of their members, there was general agreement on the potential for funds to also support expansion of sectors that generated a return while contributing positively towards net zero goals. Affordable housing, targeted SME finance, clean energy and natural capital were all identified as examples that have such potential.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'B'.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

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

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Gofynner am / Please ask for: Anthony Parnell

Dyddiad / Date: 10 December 2025

E-bost / E-mail: Walespensionpartnership@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Carolyn Thomas, MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1SN

Petition P-06-1522 Convene a summit to accelerate sustainable and ethical investment by public sector pensions

Dear Carolyn Thomas, MS

Thank you for your letter dated 26 June 2025 in relation to the above petition and firstly please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) is committed to carrying out our duties as an asset owner responsibly. We aim to be responsible stewards of our investments, reflected in both our asset-allocation and stewardship decisions, which are implemented by our service providers on our behalf.

We regularly review (and evolve) our approach, working with stakeholders to ensure our investments continue to reflect our legal obligations, as well as the values outlined in our suite of Responsible Investment Policies. For example, we recently consolidated our passive-equity allocations into a bespoke single pooled fund. The fund applies WPP's stewardship processes (including voting) and incorporates various ESG criteria (including forward-looking climate factors) into the fund structure. We are currently reviewing our investment framework as a whole, including exclusions that could apply to all WPP investments, a statement on which is available on our website.

At the heart of our approach is the collaboration we have achieved between our partner funds across Wales, which we are pleased will continue in 2026 through the WPP Investment Management Company, in line with the UK Government's Fit for the Future plans. We see our partnership as a particular strength of the WPP, and hope to continue reflecting the unique cultural and national characteristics of Wales within our investments, where possible. This includes investing in local opportunities that promote economic growth and support communities within Wales. We already invest in a number of areas explicitly

mentioned in the Committee's petition (P-06-1522), including social housing, regenerative forestry and local green energy. This includes recent allocations to a forestry fund that will generate income from sustainably harvested timber within Wales, supporting carbon sequestration, habitat protection and local job creation. We have also worked with our infrastructure partners to develop both renewable capacity and supportive technologies, including battery-storage infrastructure on the sites of former coal-fired power plants. On the social side, one of our private-debt allocations looks to deliver affordable housing in Wales, supporting housebuilders while targeting economic growth and job creation.

We are keen to understand what impact our current investments (not just at the Pool level, but across the investments of our underlying partner funds) have within Wales. To that end, we recently partnered with The Good Economy to undertake an all-Wales place-based impact-investing report. This will draw on elements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and should provide insight (including informing future activity) into the extent that our investments are contributing directly in Wales to specific areas of impact, including: affordable housing; regeneration; infrastructure; clean energy; natural capital; job creation; and business growth.

Yours Faithfully,

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

Cllr. Peter Lewis
Chair of the Joint Governance Committee, Wales Pension Partnership

To: The Petitions Committee of the Senedd

From: Heather Bolton Divest Gwynedd

Date: 19 January 2026

Subject: Response to Correspondence regarding Petition P-06-1522

Dear Carolyn Thomas, Chair of the Petitions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the letters provided to us in your latest email. We have endeavoured to respond within the questions allocated in said email. Should you wish to receive any additional information, please do let us know.

1. What are your thoughts on the attached documents?

We acknowledge the responses from Cllr. Peter Lewis (WPP) and Cabinet Secretary for Housing Jayne Bryant MS. It is encouraging to see the WPP's transition toward an FCA-regulated Investment Management Company by March 2026 and their partnership with The Good Economy to report on place-based impact investment.

However, these documents describe improved processes without a definitive commitment to divestment. A commitment on decarbonisation was expressed by Senedd members when motion NDM 7964 was passed with only one vote against in May 2022. This motion "called on the Welsh Government to work with the public sector to agree a strategy to decarbonise pensions by 2030, thus bringing them into line with current public sector targets". The proposed summit would provide much needed stimulus for such a strategy and ensure compliance with the wishes of Senedd members. While the WPP states it is "currently reviewing its investment framework" this language has been used for several years without resulting in a hard policy to exit fossil fuels or companies complicit in human rights violations.

The Welsh Government's response identifies pensions as a "reserved matter" but we believe this underplays the "soft power" and leadership role the Senedd can exert—as it did when Wales became the first nation to declare a Climate Emergency. Again, the proposed summit would provide an opportunity for demonstration of this leadership role.

The Petitions Committee has a proven track record of exercising leadership on non-devolved issues when they impact the Welsh public. Under the chairmanship of Jack Sargeant MS, the Committee conducted high-profile scrutiny into the prepayment meter scandal and the need for social energy tariffs. Although energy policy is reserved to Westminster, the Committee issued hard-hitting recommendations to the Welsh Government, successfully

urging them to use their intergovernmental channels to press the UK Government and Ofgem for urgent reform. This work demonstrated that the Committee and the Welsh Government can effectively act as a catalyst for national change, even when direct legislative power lies elsewhere.

2. Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

No, it does not. The primary objective of the petition—a national summit to accelerate the transition away from unethical and climate-damaging investments—remains unaddressed. The letter from the Cabinet Secretary repeats many points made in previous letters and does not address the urgency of the issue at hand. The Event about decarbonisation of funds she mentions, took place in 2023 and although potentially valuable, resulted in no concrete outcomes.

-The exclusions gap: The WPP mentions exclusions for tobacco and coal. However, it continues to hold significant stakes in oil and gas companies. Until there is a time-bound commitment to divest from all fossil fuel companies, the pool is not aligned with Wales’s own 2030 and 2050 climate targets.

-The accountability gap: While governance is being strengthened, there is no mandate for alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act is currently treated as an “inspiration” rather than a hard constraint on fiduciary duty.

3. Do you have further questions in response?

In light of the March 2026 deadline for the new WPP operating model, we ask:

1. Exclusion timeline: When will the review of the investment framework be completed, and will it include a commitment to phase out all fossil fuel holdings by 2030?

2. Human rights standards: Will the new investment management company adopt a robust “Human rights due diligence” policy that triggers automatic divestment from companies operating in illegal settlements or conflict zones or otherwise involved in human rights abuses.?

3. Fiduciary duty: How is the WPP evolving its approach to *acting in members best interests*? Is the framework being updated to ensure that long-term climate stability and biodiversity resilience is given the same weight as short-term financial returns when making investment decisions? These factors will increasingly outweigh all others in benefits to scheme members, e.g. a new report from the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and the University of Exeter has found that previous analyses may have substantially underestimated the economic impact of climate change. Research by the U.K’s Climate Financial Risk Forum suggests that a “plausible, severe combined climate

and nature shock scenario” could lead to a global economic contraction of between 15% and 20%.

4. Public and petitioner involvement: As the WPP transitions to its new governance structure, what formal mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that petitioners, LGPS scheme members, and the wider Welsh public can meaningfully participate in and influence future investment and divestment decisions? In particular, will LGPS scheme members’ attitudes to fossil fuel holdings and investments in companies associated with human rights abuses be systematically explored, given that surveys conducted elsewhere have suggested these to be major concerns for scheme members? On the subject of public involvement, we would also draw the committee’s attention to the continued exclusion of the public from certain parts of WPP JGC meetings relating to climate risk, responsible investment and engagement reports. Legal advice obtained from Odette Chalaby (at the time with No5 Chambers), via the Environmental Law Foundation has cast doubt on these blanket exclusions.

The proposed summit would provide a forum to address such issues.

4. Additional information for the committee

-Scale of the issue: Research indicates that Welsh LGPS funds still hold over £1 billion in fossil fuel companies and firms associated with international law violations and human rights abuses. A Size of Wales and Global Canopy report from November 2023 estimated that close to £10 billion of Welsh LG funds are at risk of exposure to companies involved in global deforestation. These investments, alongside driving climate change and biodiversity loss are often accompanied by human rights abuses impacting local communities.

-Public demand: Our calls for the public sector to lead by example through divestment is widely supported and we request that the committee act on those concerns with urgency. We have the support of partners such as Divest Cymru, Climate Cymru, Global Climate Justice Group Wales, PSC Cymru and more. Furthermore, several Welsh Councils including Cardiff, Swansea, Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire, Clwyd, Newport, Powys, Ceredigion, Caerphilly and Neath Port Talbot have passed motions in relation to divestment from fossil fuel companies and /or those complicit in human rights abuses in Palestine and elsewhere.

-Investment and divestment: The WPP investments of the Sustainable Active Equity Fund, such as in social housing, renewables etc are very much welcomed. However, this is presently only a small proportion of the total WPP fund. There is a massive potential for an increase in such sustainable place-based investments which would directly benefit both fund members and Wales as a whole. The Summit suggested in the petition could serve to facilitate the identification of potential

investments of this kind which would be mutually beneficial to WG and the WPP fund. Investment managers have told us that finding suitable place-based investments have proved challenging in the past.

It is also important to say that ethical and sustainable investments do not cancel out harmful ones, these need to be addressed urgently.

-Financial returns on fossil fuel vs non-fossil fuel investments: Various providers of decision support tools for the global investment community publish indices that reveal superior performance of non-fossil fuel investments relative to fossil fuel investments. For example, the Morgan Stanley Capital International World Index excluding fossil fuel investments has risen considerably more than the parent MSCI World Index (which does include fossil fuel investments) over the period 2012-2025, with superior performance in 11 out of 14 years.

(<https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/255599/msci-world-ex-fossil-fuels-index-usd-net.pdf>).

Claims are often made that fossil fuel divestment is non-compliant with fiduciary duty; such comparative indices and other evidence show these claims to be unfounded. In addition, there is an increasing risk of stranded assets of fossil fuel investments.

-Limitations of the current policy of engagement: The success of engagement is repeatedly overstated by engagement providers with a vested financial interest. For example, the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum Annual Report for 2024 showed that of 48 recommendations in AGM voting alerts that were directly related to climate policies, just one was successful, on National Grid's Climate Transition Plan. Case studies from the report showed that despite engagement efforts, BP abandoned a target to cut oil and gas output by 2030 and Shell cut its net carbon intensity targets.

Petitions committee as leader: We maintain that the Petitions committee should lead on planning the scope and format of this summit. The Senedd has a clear precedent for investigating non-devolved matters that impact the Welsh public. For example, the Culture and Communications Committee previously produced an influential report and recommendations for S4C, despite broadcasting being a reserved issue. Given that public pensions involve billions in Welsh deferred wages and directly affect our long-term climate resilience, we believe this issue merits the same proactive leadership. We urge the Committee to start the process of defining this summit's scope to ensure our investments align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

We look forward to your response,

Kind Regards,

Heather Bolton, Divest Gwynedd

Agenda Item 3.3

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

This petition was submitted by Mark Gibbins, having collected a total of 2,797 signatures.

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.

- Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref: CEO.18672

Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Anna Alderson

Rhif Ffôn /Telephone: 01267 239892

Dyddiad/Date: 17 December 2025

Swyddfeydd Corfforaethol, Adeilad Ystwyth
Hafan Derwen, Parc Dewi Sant, Heol Ffynnon Job
Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin, SA31 3BB

Corporate Offices, Ystwyth Building
Hafan Derwen, St Davids Park, Job's Well Road,
Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA31 3BB

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
By email: petitions@senedd.wales

Dear Carolyn

Re: Petition P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan Minor Injuries Unit

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 October 2025 in respect of the recent petition: P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan Minor Injuries Unit, and I apologise for my delay in responding.

By way of background, last winter the Health Board utilised some funds from its Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) allocation received from Welsh Government to pilot the opening of the Cardigan Same Day Urgent Care (SDUC) Unit seven days a week, to address the increased winter pressures and to support our population. The pilot demonstrated that the increased opening of the SDUC Unit at Cardigan Integrated Care Centre (CICC) had a positive impact in mitigating some Emergency Department attendances that would otherwise have presented at Bronglais General Hospital and/or Glangwili General Hospital.

The intention of the pilot was to test the impact and inform our future service modelling and design.

Subsequently, the Health Board is now looking to develop a business case to cover a seven-day week Clinical Streaming Hub at the CICC. The business case is currently being developed and will form part of the Health Board's wider UEC programme. The intention is to present a report on the business case to the Public Board for further consideration at its meeting on 29 January 2026.

It should be noted, however, that until support is gained to secure the required resources, the Health Board is, at present, unable to move to a permanent seven-day week SDUC model.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Phil Kloer
Chief Executive

**P-06-1543 Keep weekend opening at Cardigan minor injuries unit -
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 16 January 2026**

Hello,

Thank you all for looking at this and taking the matter seriously,

Whilst I understand this is of a funding issue,

Public health and service should be considered too, people are dying due to the travel times involved also the pressures on staff at the other hospitals in the region must also be considered.

Many thanks

Mark Gibbins

Agenda Item 3.4

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

This petition was submitted by Christine Castle, having collected a total of 1,304 signatures.

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.

Senedd Constituency and Region:

- Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
- Mid and West Wales



Ein cyf/ Our ref: CEO.18668

Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Sonja Wright

Rhif Ffôn / Telephone: 01267 239730

Dyddiad/ Date: 16 December 2025

Swyddfeydd Corfforaethol, Adeilad Ystwyth
Hafan Derwen, Parc Dewi Sant, Heol Ffynnon Job
Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin, SA31 3BB

Corporate Offices, Ystwyth Building
Hafan Derwen, St Davids Park, Job's Well Road,
Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA31 3BB

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee
By email: petitions@senedd.wales

Dear Carolyn,

Re: Petition P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili Hospital

Thank you for your correspondence dated 23 October 2025 highlighting the above petition and details of the consideration given to its contents by the Petitions Committee at its meeting on 6 October 2025.

The Health Board accepts and acknowledges that the Health Board has a number of fragile services and that the experience for some of our patients is not always as it would want it to be. Over recent years there have been a range of factors, including Covid, economic challenges and a deterioration in the health of the population, that have added to existing pressures on NHS services, alongside demographic impacts linked to an ageing population. These challenges are not unique to Hywel Dda or to one specific hospital and, as the petition correspondence notes, similarly affect Health Boards in NHS Wales and across the UK.

Alongside these general factors, the Health Board faces a number of specific challenges. These include workforce deficits, an ageing estate, rurality and the duplication of hospital services on multiple sites:

Workforce Deficits: Over recent years the Health Board has been successful in recruiting to nursing vacancies, supported by the recruitment of around 300 internationally educated nurses and a successful apprenticeship programme, enabling Band 5 vacancies to reduce to 0.8% (down from 9% in 2021). In turn this has allowed a significant reduction in the use of agency nurses (64% lower than last year).

Having a fully established, substantive workforce is vital to providing high quality services and an improved patient experience. We are now seeking to take a similar approach to medical staffing, another area where there has traditionally been

significant deficits. While this is a more complex area to address, a programme of work has been established to ensure further progress is made with this.

Estate: It is well documented that the Health Board faces considerable challenges from its ageing estate. Glangwili General Hospital (GGH) is the oldest acute hospital in Wales and nearly 90% of the Withybush General Hospital (WGH) site is affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). The Health Board, supported by Welsh Government, has spent over £50m on these two sites alone over the past few years. Unfortunately, most of this expenditure is in response to critical service continuity risks, such as RAAC, remedial fire works and other aspects, including electrical infrastructure.

We accept that patients may not have seen improvement in the care environment through these investments, nor have they served to increase capacity or efficiency. We continue to work closely with Welsh Government to determine the strategic plan for these sites and to secure the investment required to deliver fit-for-purpose hospital facilities for the long-term.

The Health Board has recently received confirmation of Welsh Government funding for over £2m investment to deliver improvements at GGH. This will enable increased capacity and a better patient environment at Priory Day Hospital in GGH for patients who currently access the Emergency Department (ED). Work on this will commence immediately and is expected to be completed by March 2026.

With regard to the specific concerns raised in the 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.

Service configuration: We understand there are strong feelings about local hospitals and access to services. Given our rurality, West Wales typically has services spread across multiple sites. This often means services are fragile, reliant on a small number of individuals and unable to meet modern standards of care. We were explicit in our strategy, *A Healthier Mid and West Wales* (2018) that this is unsustainable. At the same time, the distances in West Wales are well known and the transport infrastructure is poor.

A refresh of the *A Healthier Mid and West Wales* strategy is currently underway, supported by a public engagement exercise concluding on 28 November 2025. As part of the refresh, work on the Health Board's existing transport strategic plan will be refined, to consider how best to adapt to meet local transport needs, with room to allow for the outcomes of the Clinical Services Plan consultation and longer-term strategic thinking. The strategy refresh will also reflect that the Health Board has had further constructive discussions with Welsh Government on the infrastructure challenges facing the organisation, in particular at the WGH and GGH sites. A draft refreshed strategy will be reviewed by the Board at its public meeting in January 2026.

Change will be necessary and we will continue to work with our population to identify the most appropriate solutions and mitigate the impacts as much as possible. We have recently undertaken engagement and consultation activities, for example on the Minor Injury Unit at Prince Philip Hospital (PPH) and on our Clinical Services Plan, where all responses are analysed and reported to the Board, playing an important part in decision-making. The Clinical Services Plan will be presented to the Board at an Extraordinary Public Board meeting in February 2026, where the Board will be asked to make decisions on the next steps.

The Health Board also acknowledges the challenges it faces in regard to Pathway of Care Delays (delayed discharge) and long lengths of stay:

- Pathway of Care Delays are increasing; 258 delays were reported for October 2025 (against a target of 174). This reflects the system's challenge in moving patients through to appropriate care settings. October 2025 data also shows that clinically optimised patient discharge before midday remains low across all Hywel Dda hospital sites, limiting ward bed availability for new admissions.
- Long lengths of stay: performance data for October 2025 shows GGH and PPH having the highest numbers of patients staying over 50 days (40–45 patients) and over 100 days (10–15 patients).

A range of actions and plans to address delayed discharge and length of stay are being progressed to address these challenges, including:

- Front and Back Door Reset Weeks which are driving some improvements in handover times.
- 'Call before Convey' and direct lines to Clinical Streaming Hubs for Care Homes.
- Recruitment of Optimal Flow Practitioners from Welsh Government pilot monies and implementation of new policies.
- Development of staff training and awareness videos to support patient flow and discharge planning, including the roll out of an online discharge toolkit for staff, with discharge resources and training material.
- Roll-out of Care Home Falls Training and falls equipment across the Health Board in December 2025, with the aim of improving falls responses in care homes, reducing harm, and reducing conveyance rates from care homes to EDs.
- Launch of an integrated Strengths Based Collaborative Communication training programme to support discharge planning.
- Launch of a transport service to support Clinical Streaming services across the Health Board in December 2025, to support effective Hospital at Home services and reduce ED attendances.

Patient Experience in A&E: In order to improve patient experience in A&E, the Health Board is progressing the following initiatives under its Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) Environment Programme:

- **Cleanliness and Facilities:** A comprehensive scoping exercise has been completed for domestic and portering staff coverage in EDs with a gap analysis on service provision and standards underway. Environmental audits, including domestics, estates, and nursing, are regularly conducted, with results reviewed to drive improvements. Early involvement of Infection Prevention & Control (IP&C) is being embedded in all room reconfigurations and upgrades

- **Patient Experience and Communication:** Patient information screens are being installed and maintained across all sites, with a focus on delivering consistent, clear messaging about ED processes, nutrition, hydration, and wayfinding. Content is being developed with our Communications and Engagement colleagues to ensure all patients and relatives are kept informed during their visit.

Refurbishments have been made to key areas, such as relatives' viewing rooms and paediatric waiting rooms (including sensory rooms) to improve comfort, privacy, and dignity for patients and their families. These changes are designed to reduce anxiety and create a more compassionate environment.

- **Digital and Service Innovations:** Digital solutions to improve patient flow and experience are being explored, such as self-registration and e-triage systems. A pilot for a wayfinding robot and the procurement of sensory equipment for patients with learning disabilities or dementia are underway, supported by charitable funds.
- **Staff Support and Training.** A baseline audit of patient experience has been completed, providing a benchmark for future improvements. The presence of PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) team members in reception areas are also being organised to further enhance the patient and staff environment.

Comprehensive details of immediate actions and the progression of systemic solutions to address the challenges facing UEC and to build resilience into the UEC system are included in the following paper (slides 9-11), which was reviewed by the Board at its public meeting held on 27 November 2025:

[Urgent Emergency Care, Six Goals Programme Update](#)

I hope that this information provides you with some assurance regarding the Health Board's plans to address the concerns raised in the petition.

Yours sincerely



Professor Phil Kloer
Chief Executive

P-06-1544 Take urgent action to improve the NHS in West Wales, and address the crisis at Glangwili hospital - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 21 January 2026

Dear Kayleigh, Carolyn and Prof Kloer

Many thanks for this comprehensive update and reassurance that the Health Board are aware and acting to try to resolve the issues raised in the petition.

Whilst I am grateful to the Health Board and the Petitions Committee for acting and raising this matter, I am not at all reassured that the Welsh Government have also been held to account. As was raised in the additional correspondence that I supplied with the petition, and as Prof Kloer also muted in their response, there are a number of examples that demonstrate that this is a Wales-wide matter and that Welsh Government are culpable also. In the case of this petition, Welsh Government should be answering the strength of feeling from residents and patients within the Hywel Dda region for this Health Board to be fully supported via public funds and political will. Additionally Welsh Government are answerable to the wider public of Wales to deliver comprehensive action that does not focus entirely on Cardiff and the surrounding area.

For the Minister to have answered the initial discussion at the Petitions Committee by leaving the onus solely to the Health Board for a response, when health is a devolved matter for which Welsh Government should be held accountable did not feel appropriate. I would welcome a Welsh Government response to ensure that the answer to these issues is joined up and comprehensive, as no one service can resolve such systemic issues alone.

With kind regards

Christine

Agenda Item 3.5

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

This petition was submitted by Louise Phillips, having collected a total of 1,281 signatures.

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.

Additional information:

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.

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1545
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/01245/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

22 December 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 22 October 2025 regarding Petition P-06-1545, *Stop forcing school children to undress in front of staff/peers in 'open' communal rooms*. I appreciate the opportunity to consider the petitioners' further comments, questions and recommendations attached to your letter. I also understand that the petition will be kept open pending my response.

I have reviewed the petitioners' comments, questions and recommendations alongside my initial comprehensive response. In relation to the petitioner's recommendations (1) and (2), I believe my initial response clearly outlines the Welsh Government's position. In relation to recommendation (3) and safeguarding I will add the following to my initial response. You will wish to be aware that in the coming months we will be undertaking a review of our safeguarding arrangements, and I have asked officials to ensure that consideration is given to this issue as part of that work. In addition, we will also look to update our existing Keeping Learners Safe guidance, this will be subject to full consultation and the petitioner will have the opportunity to raise any concerns as part of that process.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Lynne.Neagle@llyw.cymru
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.

Back Page 98
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.

Having given the matter full consideration, I do not have any other further information to provide at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lynne Neagle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

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 the Committee, 21 January 2025

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the attached document ahead of the Committee's consideration of my petition on 26 January 2026.

I welcome the continued engagement with this petition. However, having reviewed the attached document, I do not believe it adequately addresses the core issues raised.

1. Overall view of the attached document

The document largely reiterates existing legislation and statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, well-being, and school premises. While it affirms that safeguarding and learner well-being are priorities, it does not introduce clear, enforceable requirements to ensure children can change with privacy and dignity.

The central concern of my petition remains unresolved: children in Wales can still be required, in practice, to undress in open communal spaces for compulsory education activities, with no guaranteed private alternative.

2. The document does not address the issues raised for the following reasons:

- No guaranteed right to privacy
The document does not require schools to provide a private changing option for pupils who request it. As a result, children's access to privacy remains discretionary rather than a protected right, undermining Article 16 UNCRC (right to privacy) and related protections under Articles 12, 19 and 23.
- Lack of enforceable standards
References to "appropriate", "sensitive" or "adequate" arrangements remain undefined. There are no minimum standards, ratios, or expectations for private changing facilities, nor any mechanism to ensure consistency across local authorities.
- Safeguarding risks remain unmitigated
The document does not directly address well-established risks associated with communal changing, including peer-on-peer abuse, bullying, body-shaming, harmful sexual behaviour, or the misuse of phones and cameras in changing areas.
- Disabled toilets continue to be treated as a substitute
There is no explicit prohibition on using disabled toilets as the primary private changing option, which creates access issues for disabled pupils and amounts to an inadequate and discriminatory workaround.

- No protection from punitive consequences
The document does not prevent pupils from being penalised or excluded from participation where they decline to change publicly due to privacy, religious, cultural, disability, or mental-health reasons.
 - Inclusion and privacy are not properly reconciled
While inclusion is emphasised, the document does not set out a clear policy framework that guarantees choice — allowing any pupil (including trans or gender-questioning pupils) to access private changing without creating safeguarding gaps or forcing others into shared undressing.
-

3. Further questions for the Committee to consider

I respectfully ask the Committee to seek clarity from the Welsh Government on the following:

1. Will the Government commit to amending statutory guidance or regulations to require (not merely recommend) private changing options in secondary schools?
 2. What inspection or enforcement mechanism will ensure that children's privacy in changing areas is assessed and acted upon (for example, through Estyn)?
 3. Will clear national rules be issued on technology use in changing areas, including explicit device bans and supervision expectations?
 4. Will the Government prohibit the use of disabled toilets as the default private changing solution?
 5. Will schools be required to ensure that no pupil is punished or disadvantaged for declining to change in communal spaces?
 6. Will anonymised national data be collected on incidents, complaints, or safeguarding referrals linked to changing facilities?
-

4. Additional points for the Committee's attention

- This petition has highlighted cross-generational, lived harm: adults reporting trauma from school experiences and children currently opting out of PE due to lack of privacy. This demonstrates the urgency of structural change, not reliance on discretionary practice.
- The issue is not opposition to inclusion. The petition calls for guaranteed choice, dignity, and safety for all pupils — aims that are compatible with inclusive education when properly implemented.
- Practical, low-cost mitigations (staggered changing, screens, cubicles, clear device policies) can be implemented immediately without waiting for major capital investment.

5. Conclusion

The attached document reassures the Committee that safeguarding and well-being are priorities, but it does not close the policy gap that allows children's privacy to be compromised in practice. Without explicit national direction and enforceable standards, pupils remain reliant on goodwill rather than guaranteed rights and are currently at immediate risk daily.

I therefore ask the Committee to continue to press the Welsh Government to bring forward concrete proposals to embed privacy, dignity, and safeguarding into school changing arrangements.

Thank you for your continued consideration of this petition.

Kind regards,
Louise Phillips
Petitioner, P-06-1545

Agenda Item 3.6

P-06-1561 Close the gender gap in Welsh women's football: fund a national equality plan

This petition was submitted by Osamagbe Izevbigie, having collected 335 signatures.

Text of petition:

Despite progress in recent years, Welsh women's football still lacks equal development pathways, funding, and visibility. Girls face barriers to progressing beyond the grassroots level, especially after U19. We need a national plan that ensures parity across youth and elite levels by 2030. Wales cannot afford to lose more talent to inequality.

Additional information:

We call on the Welsh Government to provide the funding to enable the FAW and Sport Wales to deliver a 5-point plan:

- Create Women's U21 and U23 national teams
- Expand access through regional talent ID and outreach
- Guarantee equal media promotion
- Introduce a national player support scheme
- Publish a measurable 5-year national equality plan

This is about opportunity, fairness, and Wales leading the way in women's sport.

Senedd Constituency and Region:

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

16 December 2025

Annwyl Carolyn,

Petition P-06-1561 Close the gender gap in Welsh women's football fund a national equality plan

Many thanks for your letter dated 10th December 2025. We at the Football Association of Wales very much welcome this petition which aligns closely with our own dedication to tackling inequality, which is really important to us not only across the women and girls' game, but across all areas of football.

The Football Association of Wales (FAW) remains firmly committed to expanding opportunities for women and girls across all levels of football. Since the publication of the "Our Wales: FOR HER" strategy in 2021, we have made significant progress in developing all aspects of the women's game; enhancing structures, improving equity, and creating an environment where women and girls can thrive.

As participation continues to grow rapidly, new opportunities have emerged to further strengthen the female player pathway. Key developments include the establishment of the Girls' Regional Programme, now recognised by FIFA, the creation of the National Academi (Girls), and exploratory work to expand age-group national teams in the coming years. The pathway is now supported by full-time coaching staff across all age groups, ensuring consistency, excellence, and professionalism in the development of future talent.

Investment in the women's national teams and pathway programmes now mirrors provision within the men's game. The FAW has further strengthened the girls' pathway by appointing six full-time positions to deliver the Girls' Regional Programme (U12–U17) in both North and South Wales. This investment ensures a world-class, high-performance environment that prepares elite female players for success on the international stage.

Over the past four years, the FAW has achieved a number of important milestones in women's and girls' football. Participation has reached a record 20,000 players across Wales, surpassing our strategic target ahead of schedule. The Women's National Team has qualified for its first major tournament, UEFA Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland, offering an unprecedented platform to showcase Welsh culture and Welsh women's football to new global audiences. We have consistently broken attendance records at women's national team fixtures, including a significant travelling fan base in Switzerland this summer. In addition, our legacy work, supported by Welsh Government, received global recognition at the World Football Summit Awards for *Best Initiative for Women's Football*.



Throughout the UEFA Women's EUROs, the FAW delivered extensive promotion and coverage of the women's game utilising innovative and creative approaches to engage audiences - from the squad announcement alone, the coverage reach was 3.6 Billion. The cumulative reach from socials, broadcast and media throughout Cymru's journey at UEFA Women's Euro's 2025 was 33.88 billion. The addition of initiatives such as The Cwtsh connected by EE, and support through commercial partners the awareness of Cymru's participation at UEFA Women's Euro 2025 increased from 58% to 70%, with 1 in 4 people now more likely to attend a Cymru Women's football match. This extensive work has supported in elevating visibility, inspiring participation, and deepening engagement with the public.

Looking ahead, the FAW will launch a new long-term strategy in 2026: a 10-year vision that will prioritise sustainable growth across the women's game. This strategy will build strong foundations for participation and development while delivering an ambitious, holistic, and inspiring performance programme for the next generation of players. Alongside growing the game, we are actively working to bring world-class women's football events to Wales; including hosting the UEFA Women's Champions League Final in 2029 and co-hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2035. These events would significantly enhance Wales' international profile, increase tourism and economic activity, and provide a powerful platform to showcase Welsh culture to global audiences.

To realise these ambitions, our key ask is for continued and enhanced government support to make football, and sport more broadly, as accessible as possible for women and girls across Wales. Ensuring equal access to football in schools is essential to promoting healthy lifestyles, building confidence, and developing the next generation of Welsh female leaders. We are passionate about empowering women and girls to choose sport, and ensuring they have the right opportunities, environments, and experiences to feel confident and comfortable participating in physical activity.

We would be happy to accept an invitation to present our progress, priorities, and future ambitions to the committee, and to continue working collaboratively to deliver genuine, lasting change for women and girls across Wales.

Cofion cynnes,

Alys Carlton

Alys Carlton

Football Association of Wales – Independent Chair

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P-06-1561 Close the gender gap in Welsh women’s football fund a national equality plan – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 15 January 2026

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

I am submitting this response to Petition P-06-1561 following discussions with my co-petitioner, Osas Osamagbe Izevbigie, regarding our joint petition on the development and support of women’s and girls’ football in Wales.

These conversations have allowed us to clarify our shared concerns and ensure that the issues highlighted in the petition—particularly the structural gaps in the female player pathway, the absence of Women’s U21 and U23 national teams, the need for a national player support scheme, and the requirement for a funded, time-bound equality plan—are accurately and comprehensively communicated to the Committee.

We continue to actively engage with relevant stakeholders to advance these issues and will be meeting with Jane Hutt MS tomorrow and Kanishka Narayan MP next month. We hope this demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring meaningful action is taken.

This submission reflects our combined views and aims to provide a detailed, constructive response to the Football Association of Wales’ previous submission, with the goal of supporting the Committee in seeking clear commitments, timelines, and accountability from both the FAW and the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

Carmen Kelly

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Football Association of Wales’ response to Petition P-06-1561.

While we welcome the FAW’s recognition of the importance of women’s and girls’ football and acknowledge progress in participation, elite performance, and visibility, their response does not adequately address the central concerns of the petition.

The petition highlights a persistent structural gap in the female player pathway—specifically, the absence of Women’s U21 and U23 national teams and the resulting loss of players after U19. This issue is not resolved by participation growth, tournament success, or media coverage, and it is not meaningfully addressed in the FAW response.

The FAW refers to “exploratory work” on additional age-group teams, but provides no commitment, timeline, funding plan, or accountability mechanism for Women’s U21 or U23

national teams. These pathways exist in the men's game, directly contradicting the claim that investment now mirrors men's football.

The petition also calls for a national player support scheme to address the financial, welfare, and transition pressures faced by female players at the academy level—pre- and post-U19. The FAW response makes no mention of such a scheme. This omission is significant, as financial hardship is a leading cause of player drop-out.

Currently, talented players are lost from the pathway simply because they cannot afford to continue. Costs related to travel, training, equipment, education, lost earnings, and relocation disproportionately affect female players, many of whom balance football with work or study without comparable financial support. Without a national player support scheme, equality of opportunity is unattainable.

While the FAW highlights promotional success around major tournaments, this does not guarantee consistent media coverage across all levels. The petition seeks structural commitments and policy guarantees, not event-led visibility.

Finally, the petition calls for a funded, measurable five-year national equality plan with published targets and accountability. The FAW instead references a 10-year strategy that is unpublished and lacks measurable benchmarks, timelines, or equality indicators. As such, it cannot be evaluated against the petition's aims.

In summary, the FAW submission largely describes achievements and ambitions but does not respond directly to the petition's specific asks:

- The creation of Women's U21 and U23 national teams
- The introduction of a national player support scheme for players facing financial hardship
- A structured solution to pre- and post-U19 drop-off
- Guaranteed equality in media promotion
- A funded, time-bound national equality plan with measurable outcomes

The central unresolved question is:

"Will the FAW commit to establishing Women's U21 and U23 national teams by a specific date, and what funding will ensure these teams operate on a basis equivalent to the men's pathway? If a commitment cannot be made, please explain why parity is not currently achievable."

We also suggest the Committee consider asking the FAW:

- How does the FAW justify claiming mirrored investment with the men's game when equivalent post-U19 pathways do not exist for women?
- Will the FAW introduce a national player support scheme, and how will it support talented players unable to continue due to financial hardship?
- What measurable equality targets, timelines, and reporting mechanisms will ensure accountability in the proposed strategy?

- What guarantees will ensure equal media promotion across all levels of the women's and girls' pathway, not only during major tournaments?

The petition remains valid and unresolved. We respectfully ask the Committee to continue its consideration and seek clear commitments, timelines, and accountability from both the FAW and the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

Carmen Kelly

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-06-1541
Our ref HIDCC/00012/26

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

20 January 2026

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 5 January regarding petition P-06-1541, Produce a Clean Water Bill for Wales and for Welsh Rivers, and for sharing the petitioners' detailed note and legislative proposal from Save the River Usk. I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this important issue and the opportunity to respond further following my letter of 24 October.

I recognise the strength of feeling among petitioners and the wider public about the health of our rivers, as well as the urgency expressed by Save the River Usk. Their note highlights the ongoing challenges facing Welsh rivers, including the need for more effective regulation, enforcement, and community involvement. I acknowledge their call for a dedicated Clean Water Bill and their concerns about the pace of progress, the effectiveness of current permitting and regulatory arrangements, and the importance of clear, unambiguous legislation focused solely on water health.

As outlined in my previous correspondence, the Welsh Government remains committed to strengthening environmental law and improving water quality. We intend to publish a Green Paper consultation in the coming weeks. The Green Paper will set out our views on the recommendations from the Independent Water Commission's final report and recognises that water is essential to every part of life in Wales for the health of our people and nature, the success of our economy and the resilience of our communities. It is a precious resource that must be managed sustainably, fairly and in the public interest. The Green Paper consultation is a full public consultation, and we welcome input from stakeholders as we shape our proposals for water reform.

The Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, currently under scrutiny, is a key step in our response to the climate and nature emergencies. While I note the petitioners' concerns about the Bill's scope and ambition, it does introduce a statutory framework for setting biodiversity and pollution reduction targets and will require Welsh Ministers to act in priority areas such as freshwater health.

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

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

I also recognise the petitioners' views on the need for stronger regulatory powers for Natural Resources Wales, and their suggestions for greater democratic and community involvement in water governance. These are important considerations as we continue to review and develop our approach.

I welcome the Committee's decision to include water quality and flood management as priority themes in its legacy report, and I look forward to continued engagement with the Committee and stakeholders as we work to deliver meaningful improvements for Wales's rivers.

Thank you again for your correspondence and for highlighting these important issues. I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Huw Irranca-Davies', written over a light grey rectangular background.

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