

# Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3

Meeting date: 27 September 2017

Meeting time: 08.50

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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Pre-meeting (08.50 – 09.00)

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

## 2 Inquiry into fire safety in high rise blocks in Wales: evidence session 7

(09.00 – 10.30)

(Pages 1 – 20)

Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

Martin Swain, Deputy Director, Community Safety, Welsh Government

Emma Williams, Deputy Director, Housing Policy, Welsh Government

Neil Hemington, Head of Planning, Welsh Government

## 3 Paper(s) to note

### 3.1 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure in relation to Communities First – lessons learnt

(Pages 21 – 22)

### 3.2 Correspondence from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language in relation to Communities First – lessons learnt

(Pages 23 – 42)



- 3.3 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to Communities First – lessons learnt**  
(Pages 43 – 45)
- 3.4 Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to Communities First – lessons learnt**  
(Pages 46 – 49)
- 3.5 Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Education from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to the LCM on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**  
(Pages 50 – 51)
- 3.6 Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to the LCM on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**  
(Pages 52 – 53)
- 3.7 Letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children in relation to the LCM on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**  
(Pages 54 – 55)
- 3.8 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children in relation to the LCM on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**  
(Pages 56 – 57)
- 3.9 Letter from the Secretary of State for Wales to the Llywydd in relation to the Implementation of the Wales Act 2017**  
(Page 58)
- 3.10 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to the Chair of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill**  
(Pages 59 – 62)

**3.11 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to the Chair of the Finance Committee in relation to the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill**

(Page 63)

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**

Break (10.30 – 10.45)

**5 Inquiry into fire safety in high rise blocks in Wales: discussion of evidence received under item 2**

(10.45 – 11.15)

**6 Consideration of approach to scrutiny of the Welsh Government budget 2018–19**

(11.15 – 11.30)

**7 Consideration of the draft report on the LCM on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**

(11.30 – 11.45)

(Pages 64 – 65)

Document is Restricted

## **Equalities, Local government and Communities Committee inquiry into fire safety in high rise blocks**

### **Written Evidence of the Cabinet Secretaries for Communities and Children and the Environment and Rural Affairs**

This evidence paper sets out some of the key developments, actions and considerations since the appalling tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

#### **1 Identification, Engagement and Guidance**

The scale, emerging complexity and fluid nature of activity following the Grenfell Tower fire has emphasised the critical importance of effective information-sharing and communications between administrations, agencies and, of course, tenants.

Initially, effective information flow between the UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Welsh Government proved challenging. This became yet more complex with the involvement of other agencies, for example the Building Research Establishment (BRE). The nature of the situation and speed with which circumstances evolved appeared to test and stretch resources, leading to some early difficulties. As things stand, however, communications between administrations (and, indeed, other agencies) have become more fluid and effective, with the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children engagement in ministerial groups chaired by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, at least weekly contact at official level, the establishment of key contacts and more timely sharing of intelligence.

The Welsh Government has tried to keep all those with an interest well-informed, sharing information widely, for example through:

- Regular Written Statements to Assembly Members throughout the BRE testing regime;
- A Frequently Asked Questions page [<http://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/services-and-support/grenfell-tower-faqs/?lang=en>] on the Welsh Government web pages. This has been updated on a twice-weekly basis;
- 'Myth-busting' communications with the media and in-depth updates to local government; and
- Daily, now bi-weekly, telephone conferences with key partners, including Third Sector partners and the Welsh Local Government Association.

#### Private Sector Engagement

Forming an accurate and complete picture of high-rise residential buildings in the private sector has proved difficult. As is the case elsewhere in the UK, complexities arise in establishing, for example, the number and location of

high-rise residential buildings, authoritative ownership details, accurate information on managing agents or block managers, and the presence of mixed use buildings. We have worked closely with local government, the Welsh Local Government Association and other stakeholders in our continuing efforts to identify all privately-owned residential high-rise buildings in Wales, including privately-owned student accommodation. Looking forward, however, we will work with partners to ensure a more effective system can be developed to ensure we have a complete, up-to-date list of tall buildings, and associated ownership and/or management particulars, across sectors.

As things stand, we have identified and written to the freeholders or managing agents of more than eighty privately owned high-rise blocks, setting out the steps they should take to identify and test Aluminium Composite Material cladding and, where present, the appropriate precautionary measures to be taken. We have also reminded landlords/managing agents of the need to undertake standard fire safety risk assessments in line with Government and Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) advice.

Further advice and guidance has also been provided by relevant representative bodies, including, for example, the Association of Residential Managing Agents, the Residential Landlords Association and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

#### Student Accommodation (Higher Education)

We continue to establish accurate details of high-rise student accommodation, so we, and students, can be assured of their safety and well-being. Students at higher education institutions in Wales, in common with other tenants, reside in different types of accommodation, owned or managed by different providers. We have worked with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to gather information to help enable the identification of all high-rise residential accommodation occupied by students. However, universities are not always made aware of students' term-time addresses, nor advised of changes of address. Consequently, comprehensive identification of all high-rise 'student accommodation' or accommodation used by students across sectors is complex. Universities have already provided information on buildings within their ownership, or subject to contractual arrangements, and have assisted where possible in identifying private sector high-rise accommodation.

Where institutions own residential buildings, or have a contractual relationship with external providers, they have been asked to review these; particularly high-rise buildings with ACM cladding. No such buildings have been identified. Regarding private sector providers, HEFCW has also asked institutions to identify any known high-rise accommodation used by their students (so owners or managing agents can be identified and contacted, and details established of the external envelope of their buildings). Owners or agents are being provided with access to the same screening tests, full system test results, advice and guidance as social housing landlords.

HEFCW continues to monitor guidance and information as it becomes available and is keeping institutions and the Welsh Government updated.

### Supporting Landlords

Following initial testing by the BRE and subsequent large-scale tests carried out by them, the Welsh Government has worked closely with landlords, in both the social and private sectors. Following the conclusion and reporting of BRE large-scale testing, guidance relating to the seven tests has been produced by the DCLG.

This complements Local Government Association guidance produced for the social housing sector on fire safety in purpose-built high-rise residential tower blocks. We will continue our engagement with landlords across sectors in coming to a view as to whether further, Wales-specific guidance would be beneficial.

To date, the 'failed' large-scale testing results correspond with cladding material on eleven buildings identified in Wales. We have applied a 'casework' approach to our liaison with landlords (one organisation in the social housing sector accounts for three of the buildings) and/or managing agent (there is one managing agent for the eight private sector buildings in two developments). Casework teams, comprising named Welsh Government officials, work closely with landlords, managing agents and Fire and Rescue Services, to ensure parties are well-informed, cognisant of UK Expert Panel guidance (which we have adopted) and emerging practice. Where appropriate, the teams will monitor any 'remediation' action. We will take forward a similar approach for further cases arising.

Funding for remediation work remains a matter for landlords; we are, though, alive to the potential impact of any additional new funding allocations from the UK Government and the potential for funding in terms of future Barnett consequentials that may arise.

### Advice to Tenants

Ensuring tenants are provided with updated advice and kept informed is vital and intended to reassure. There is a balance to be struck, however, between giving clear and comprehensive advice regarding fire risks, and creating unnecessary alarm (all the more so in the aftermath of an exceptional tragedy like Grenfell Tower). Giving such advice, including any updates or changes, is primarily a matter for landlords and the Fire and Rescue Service, rather than government. Overall, we are content advice has been accurate, realistic and sober. We have been impressed by some practical examples of tenant engagement and will consider how and when these can best be shared.

### Tenant Voice

In terms of ensuring a representative voice, the Welsh Government currently funds the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru (TPAS Cymru), as the representative body for social housing tenants in Wales. TPAS Cymru is best

placed to lead on tenant advocacy, in addition to providing support for tenants. As a national representative body their remit includes lobbying on behalf of their membership.

TPAS Cymru's agreed work programme for the next two years includes the production of advice and guidance to develop and promote participation in the Private Rented Sector in collaboration with partner organisations including Rent Smart Wales, Residential Landlords Association in Wales & Shelter Cymru. TPAS Cymru is also a member of the International Union of Tenants; a TPAS Cymru representative sits on the Welsh Government's Fire Safety Advisory Group.

## **2. Statutory Framework**

### The Fire Safety Order

#### *Responsible Persons*

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires 'responsible persons' to take steps to ensure fire safety within non-domestic premises. The responsible person differs depending on the type of premises concerned and there may be more than one responsible person for any given building.

Currently, the Order takes a 'general' approach in that it covers all non-domestic premises, from corner shops to tower blocks to factories, on largely the same terms.

Responsible persons need to be able to discharge the duties the Order places on them, as a lack of knowledge or competence in fire safety in general, and the Order in particular, clearly places people at risk. With this in mind, we agree further consideration should be given to the current fire safety competence requirements placed on individuals under the Order.

A more specific competence requirement may be more appropriate in respect of arrangements for high risk premises, for example tower blocks (but also recycling plants and hospitals). Applying the same requirement to, say, small farms or one-room offices could create disproportionate burdens with little effect on the generally low risk of fire in such premises.

It is also recognised that currently there are complexities for Fire and Rescue Services (and others) in *identifying* responsible persons under the Order. The breadth of the Order means anyone from a sole trader to a multinational absentee landlord may be the responsible person. The position is especially complex for buildings in mixed use or ownership, and would probably benefit from clarification or greater rigour.



The Welsh Government therefore recognises the case in principle for reviewing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. However, the power to make any amendments to the Order does not lie with the Welsh Ministers. In framing a future position, we will also wish to have regard to the recommendations arising from the independent review of buildings regulations and fire safety. We will, of course, work closely with the UK Government in terms of the implementation of any findings and their implications for the Order.

#### *Fire and Rescue Authorities and Building Control Bodies*

There is already a statutory duty within the Fire Safety Order for Building Control Bodies (Local Authorities and private Approved Inspectors) to consult the Fire and Rescue Authority where the building is subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

This duty enables the Fire and Rescue Authority to liaise with the Building Control Body regarding the fire safety requirements of the building prior to, during and following construction stages. It also provides essential information the Fire and Rescue authority will require following the completion and occupation of the building in order to undertake their duty of enforcing the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

#### *Potential for Primary Fire Authority for High-Rise Fire Safety Inspections*

It is clearly important to ensure the proper fire safety standards in all high-rise blocks, however we do not consider designating a Primary Fire Authority for this purpose would necessarily help. Our three Services work together closely on many matters, including fire safety inspection, and we will explore with them how these arrangements can be further enhanced. However, FRAs also rely heavily on local knowledge of premises and landlords, which could be jeopardised by too rigid an approach. On a practical level, any landlord which owned both high-rise and low-rise buildings outside the primary FRA's area would have to deal with two FRAs rather than one. For example, were South Wales FRA to become the primary authority, then Flintshire County Council would have to deal with it as regards its high-rise blocks, and with North Wales FRA for the remainder of its estate.

#### Building Regulations

The UK Government has established an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. Terms of reference for the review can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-publication-of-terms-of-reference>

The terms of reference indicate the review will examine the current regulatory system and, based on evidence, make recommendations which ensure the

regulatory system is fit for purpose, with a particular focus on multi-occupancy high-rise residential buildings.

Cabinet Secretaries will meet the chair of the review, Dame Judith Hackitt, to discuss engagement and the need to ensure outputs from the review are shared across administrations. The outcomes may have implications for the regulatory systems in Wales and, therefore, a close relationship between both our Governments throughout the review will be essential. To this end, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has confirmed he would strongly welcome close liaison with the Welsh Government on its work relating to the independent review of building regulations and fire safety generally

We understand the review will present an interim report in Autumn 2017, and a final report in Spring 2018. The UK Government has undertaken to act swiftly on any recommendations from this review. For our part, the Welsh Government will consider any recommendations in full.

### **3. Practical Measures**

The Welsh Government believes promoting home fire safety is vital. We know more domestic fires result from accidents than from unsafe products or premises. Advising people on how to stay safe is, therefore, at least as important as complying with building or product standards.

Accordingly, all three Fire and Rescue Services provide free home fire safety checks, funded by the Welsh Government. The check includes a comprehensive assessment of fire risks, advice on reducing them, and appropriate safety equipment such as smoke alarms or fireproof bedding. The Services actively promote the programme through numerous channels, and act on referrals from other agencies such as Local Authorities, housing associations, third sector organisations and the police. Since the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, when responsibility for this area was transferred, the three Services have completed over 780,000 checks; while some of those will have been repeat visits, the number equates to over 55% of all dwellings in Wales. While comparable data do not exist for other jurisdictions, this is clearly impressive given no-one can be forced to have a check – and many households are at low risk of fire and will have less need for one. The Services also provide very extensive general fire safety advice, including via press campaigns, public events, schools, third sector organisations and social media. We do not believe there is any particular problem here.

#### Practical Preventative Measures

Expert guidance quite properly urges landlords to take expert advice in identifying and applying remediation measures. More generally, there are prevention and suppression measures which, if applied, are likely to prevent or suppress fire.

### *Compartmentation*

Effective compartmentation is critical to containing the spread of fire. If fire propagates beyond a supposedly secure compartment (eg a flat or hotel room), then, as happened at Grenfell Tower, the safety of the entire building can be compromised. It can be particularly challenging to fight a fire once it spreads to internal voids and ducts.

Fire and Rescue Service inspections can and do verify the presence of fire doors and similar measures in common areas. This generally includes front doors of flats; if they form part of the boundary of the common area, they are covered by the Fire Safety Order. However, while the Service can take action against the responsible person in such cases, it has no jurisdiction over private residents – so actually reinstating a fire door to the front of a flat often becomes a matter between landlord and tenant (or freeholder and leaseholder), and may not be resolved quickly, if at all. There is no easy solution to this under the Order as it stands, which underlines the case for reviewing it.

The Fire and Rescue Service cannot, however, practically inspect minor modifications such as drilling through walls within or between flats. That would better be addressed by Local Housing Authorities, which have the primary responsibility to assess residential dwellings regarding health and safety concerns. This would include concerns relating to preserving compartmentalisation.

### *Sprinkler Systems*

The fitting of sprinkler systems by landlords or developers is recognised as contributing to effective fire safety measures. Since January 2016, Building Regulations require all new and converted homes to have sprinklers in place.

We are starting to see the development of a residential sprinkler supply chain to serve the new requirements. Initially activity is based on the existing sprinkler industry.

We welcome the moves by both NCH and the City and County of Swansea to retro-fit sprinkler systems to residential buildings affected by the results of BRE initial and large-scale tests.

In the case of retrospective remediation actions, responsibility for the measures rests with landlords and/or developers.

### Wind-loading impact on external wall insulation

As a separate issue we are aware of a British Board of Agreement report identifying concerns with the way wind loading impacts on external wall insulation are being assessed, particularly in tall buildings. We have written to building control bodies and competent persons self certification schemes reminding them of the requirements relating to structural safety under the building regulations and the need for vigilance when scrutinising structural

calculations. The report follows on from a number of incidents where external wall insulation panels became unattached from tower blocks in England and Scotland.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has referred the report to the Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) for advice. We will liaise with the UK Government over this and any subsequent advice to inform our next steps.

### Large scale panels on buildings

Earlier in the summer there were press reports concerning residential tower blocks in the London Borough of Southwark. These had been evacuated, and gas supplies cut off, due to remedial work to reinforce the structures not having been undertaken. The work had been identified as necessary following the Ronan Point tragedy in 1968, in which a gas explosion caused the partial collapse of the block. Officials had previously checked with UK Government there were no buildings identified following the Ronan Point incident which were located in Wales. This had been confirmed to be the case.

We were recently made aware the investigation into the Southwark buildings had raised wider concerns. These related to the general strength of buildings built with large-scale panels and, also, the ability of such panels to 'pull apart' due to the expansion and contraction of the concrete composition, leaving gaps which can impair fire compartmentation.

Officials have written to Local Authorities and registered social landlords, asking them in the first instance to identify and provide further information on any buildings using such panels. We await further guidance from the UK Standing Committee of Structural Safety (SCOSS) before progressing further.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with partners across the sectors and with the UK Government as we work to ensure the range of existing and emerging issues are fully considered and appropriate action taken forward.

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee  
ELGC(5)-26-17 Papur 2 / Paper 2  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-(P)/KS/2442/17

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

John Griffiths AM  
Chair  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

17 July 2017

Dear John

Thank you for your letter following the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children's appearance at the ELGC Committee. During his appearance, I understand the Cabinet Secretary referenced our new approach to prosperity for all including cross-Cabinet working in relation to child poverty and a national poverty action plan.

A key aim of Taking Wales Forward (2016-2021) is to deliver prosperity for all, with the understanding that prosperity brings security to individuals, families and communities. Supporting people to live independently and prosperously must underpin everything that we do and supporting economic growth and highly skilled well paid jobs cuts across the work of government. A whole-government approach to economic growth which focuses on creating and attracting high quality jobs and responds to regional needs is required. The work of Valleys Taskforce and action to support community resilience across Wales will help shape how we support the development of strong communities to alleviate the effects of poverty. However, we need to consider how all of our core services and budgets across Government can be utilised to help achieve the impacts we want to see.

Prosperity is not just about material wealth. It is about every one of us having a good quality of life, and living in safe, supportive communities. I have the lead for co-ordinating the prosperity approach across Government, however, this is embedded across the aims of all cabinet colleagues and cross departmentally. I am therefore working closely with Cabinet colleagues to shape how this approach is at the heart of everything we do, which puts a sharp focus upon delivery. It would not be prudent to publish a bespoke national poverty action plan at this point. Instead, the forthcoming national strategy will underpin the commitments set out in Taking Wales Forward and will be the vehicle for us to deliver on our aim of prosperity for all.

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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 am currently considering the appropriate mechanism for stakeholder engagement and I have commissioned my officials to review key groups and forums across government which can play a role to ensure this is a central theme in everything we do.

Our 2010 Children and Families (Wales) Measure will continue to provide the legislative framework for tackling child poverty in Wales. As you are aware, this places a duty on Welsh Ministers and named public bodies to set objectives for tackling child poverty. As part of this Measure, Welsh Government has a duty to publish a child poverty strategy and undertake a review of progress on a three year basis. The most recent Child Poverty Strategy was published in 2015 which set out five strategic objectives for tackling child poverty and improving the outcomes of low income families in Wales. On 13 December, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children published our latest statutory report on progress. We will continue delivery across Government to drive forward progress on our child poverty strategic objectives.

As our approach to prosperity for all is cross-cutting, I welcome the Committee's inter-connected approach including your focus on making the economy work for people on low incomes. I look forward to hearing the Committee's recommendations on the wider prosperity agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping flourish above the name.

**Ken Skates AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys – <i>Our Valleys, Our Future</i></b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>20 July 2017</b>
<b>BY</b>	<b>Alun Davies AM, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language</b>

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys will today publish its high-level action plan, *Our Valleys, Our Future*.

The plan sets out the taskforce's priorities for the future, based on extensive engagement with people living and working in the Valleys. It is also based on evidence the taskforce has taken over the course of the last year.

*Our Valleys, Our Future* has been developed around three key priorities:

- Good-quality jobs and the skills to do them
- Better public services
- The local community

It is the taskforce's ambition that by 2021 the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales will have been closed. This will be achieved by helping an additional 7,000 people into work and creating thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs in the Valleys.

*Our Valleys, Our Future* sets out a range of actions to achieve this goal, including creating six new strategic sites in specific areas across the Valleys where we will look to focus spending to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. The taskforce will work with local communities and local authorities to develop these hubs further to ensure their focus reflects the opportunities in each area.

The six sites are:

- Pontypridd/Treforest, focusing on residential, office, industrial and retail development
- Caerphilly/Ystrad Mynach, focusing on residential, office and industrial development
- Cwmbran, focusing on office, industrial and residential development

- Merthyr Tydfil, focusing on office, industrial and residential development
- Neath, focusing on industrial, residential, digital and energy development
- Ebbw Vale, focusing on a new automotive business park

We will also be looking to ensure more public sector jobs are relocated into the South Wales Valleys, including at the six strategic sites, where appropriate.

Over the course of the many public meetings and conversations held with people living and working in the Valleys, people told us that public services are not as joined-up as they could be.

*Our Valleys, Our Future* outlines work underway in three Valleys communities to identify barriers that prevent community action from reaching its full potential. The learning from these pathfinder projects in Llanhilleth, Ferndale and Glynneath and Banwen will help to drive change within Welsh Government and across local services.

The taskforce heard a wide range of opinions about the Valleys themselves, including about the natural beauty of the landscape but also concerns about accessibility. The plan includes a commitment to explore the development of a Valleys Landscape Park, which will support local communities to work with the public, private and third sectors to make the most of their area's natural resources and heritage.

The people living and working in each community know these areas best. We will therefore look to them to design and develop proposals which will meet their specific needs.

The establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys presents an exciting opportunity to focus efforts and resources across government to make real and lasting change. The next step is to turn these high-level priorities into specific actions.

The taskforce will work with people across the South Wales Valleys to develop a delivery plan, which will be published in the autumn.

I will update Members as the taskforce's work progresses in the coming months.





Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

#TalkValleys

# Our Valleys, Our Future

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## Chair's Foreword



**I am delighted to publish *Our Valleys, Our Future – the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys* plan. This has been put together after listening to people living and working in the Valleys. It reflects their hopes and aspirations for the future of their families and local communities.**

In July 2016, I was asked by First Minister Carwyn Jones to set up and lead a long-term piece of work, which will deliver real change for the South Wales Valleys; which will create good-quality jobs, closer to people's homes; improve people's skills and bring prosperity to all.

From the start, I was clear this taskforce will not be another case of the government deciding what is right for the South Wales Valleys. If we are to succeed where other programmes have fallen by the wayside, local communities and local people must be at the heart of the taskforce's work.

We have spent the first half of 2017 talking to and listening to people who live and work in the South Wales Valleys about what they want to see happen in their local communities, now and in the future. These interesting and insightful conversations – in public meetings, over tea and coffee and online – have helped to shape the priorities and actions in this plan.

These were not one-off conversations. I very much hope all the people and the businesses we have spoken to so far will continue to work with the members of the taskforce to help us deliver the plan we have created together.

Since starting the taskforce, I have often heard – and said – that there are more opportunities in the Valleys than there are challenges. We will build on these strengths, including the Valleys' unique and breath-taking geography. We will do more to celebrate our rich history; our environment; our culture and our green spaces – they have the potential to boost community wellbeing in the widest sense and become a magnet for visitors from home and from around the world.

I was born and brought up in Tredegar – I went to Tredegar Comprehensive School. Today, I have the privilege of representing Blaenau Gwent in the National Assembly. I've seen many changes in the Valleys over my lifetime – many of them for the better but some of them for the worse.

I want this taskforce to make a positive difference, not just to the South Wales Valleys as a whole, but to every person living and working in the Valleys.

Our first year has been fast-paced and we have had open, frank and wide-ranging conversations in taskforce meetings as we have listened to and considered evidence with people from Llanhilleth to Glynneath. This is the beginning of an exciting opportunity to work together to change lives for the better. If we don't, we will have failed.

This is a high-level action plan, which describes what we, the taskforce, want to do and how we will work with the Welsh Government, with local government and health boards, with schools and colleges with the private and third sectors and with the two city deals – Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay.

We want your feedback over the summer to help us further refine this plan and to help us start delivering these changes.

I look forward to working with people living and working in the South Wales Valleys over the coming months and years.

**Alun Davies AM**

Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language and chair of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys

## Introduction

The Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys was set up by the Welsh Government in July 2016 after the National Assembly election and the EU referendum. It is chaired by Alun Davies, the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language. Ken Skates, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and Julie James, the Minister for Skills and Science also sit on the taskforce.

The other taskforce members are:

- Ann Beynon, chair of the Cardiff Capital Region Board
- Andrew Diplock, entrepreneur, business advisor and Angel Investor
- Judith Evans, principal of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- Dr Chris Jones, chair of Cwm Taf University Health Board
- Martin Mansfield, general secretary, Wales TUC
- Cllr Andrew Morgan, leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
- Professor Brian Morgan, Cardiff University
- Jocelyn Davies, former Plaid Cymru Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration
- Fiona Jones, director of work services Wales and national employer and partnership team, Department for Work and Pensions
- Joanne Foster, government and business relations leader UK, GE Aviation
- Gaynor Richards, director, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service

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## The South Wales Valleys

**The South Wales Valleys is one of the most distinctive areas of Wales – the Valleys are known for their history; their geography and stunning landscapes and for their culture. When we talk about the Valleys, we speak about close-knit, welcoming and friendly communities.**

But the Valleys also face a unique set of deep-rooted challenges, largely caused by the decline of heavy industry and the end of coal-mining. The area lags behind the rest of Wales in economic terms; in terms of quality and length of life and in educational attainment and skills.

There have been a series of regeneration initiatives for the Valleys over the last 50 years, which have helped to transform the landscape and the area currently qualifies for European Union structural funding.

It is important that the Valleys are not defined by its challenges – many towns and communities are doing well; the Valleys are home to successful and growing businesses and public services employ many tens of thousands of people.

The Valleys are home to up to 30% of the Welsh population – every day tens of thousands of people commute south to Newport, Cardiff and Swansea to power the Welsh economy – and every weekend thousands travel north to the Valleys attracted by their growing reputation for adventure sports.

However, the sense of optimism experienced by many is not shared by all in the Valleys. Too many people do not have access to the skills they need to get a good job; for too many people, the only jobs available are insecure and low paid. Many people feel let down by their local public services and the gap between rich and poor remains stubbornly and shamefully wide.

The Brexit vote in the South Wales Valleys showed many people feel left behind and left out. It wasn't just a vote about EU membership but a vote in which people said they felt insecure about their place in the world; about their job prospects and their future.

The taskforce has been working with local communities in the South Wales Valleys to develop this high-level plan, which sets out the main actions it will take by 2021.

By 2021, the UK will have left the EU – a different relationship will have been negotiated with Europe and also between the four countries within the UK.

In South Wales, work will have begun on a number of major, multi-million pound infrastructure projects, which will have a significant impact on people living in the Valleys and the taskforce's work. These include the South Wales Metro and the M4, subject to the outcome of the public inquiry.

The taskforce will work closely with the Welsh Government to ensure that it maximises every opportunity for the Valleys from these infrastructure projects and other key commitments.

We will work closely with local councils in the Valleys and with the two city deals – the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals offer real opportunities for the Valleys.





The Cardiff Capital Region city deal is the largest of its kind, bringing together 10 local authorities with an investment fund of £1.2bn over 20 years. The Swansea Bay city deal is backed by £1.3bn of investment and aims to boost the local economy by £1.8bn over the next 15 years.

We will also work closely with businesses, with the third sector and with schools, colleges and the NHS.

The taskforce has developed this plan in response to what people living and working in the Valleys told us during 2017 – you can read a full report about what people told us [here](#).

The taskforce has also considered a lot of evidence at its meetings, which has influenced this plan. This evidence is available [here](#). And we have also taken account of some key Welsh Government strategies and initiatives, such as the development of the employability delivery plan and Taking Wales Forward. More detail is available [here](#).

**Our three priorities are:**

**Good quality jobs and the skills to do them**

**Better public services**

**My local community**

The taskforce will be holding a series of public events over the coming months to talk to people about this high-level plan.

We want your feedback about the priorities and our proposals for action. We also want your help to deliver these. The taskforce will publish a detailed delivery plan in the autumn based on your feedback.



## Listening to what the Valleys want

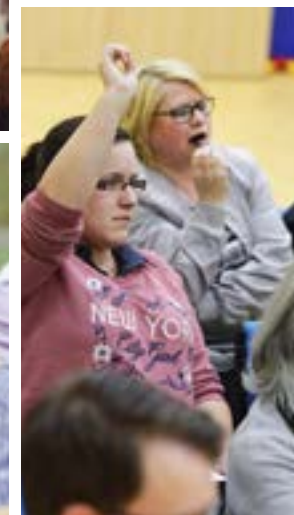
**The taskforce has been holding events across the South Wales Valleys to talk to and listen to people, businesses and communities about their priorities for the future.**

We have met, talked to and listened to people in formal public meetings; in focus groups; in meetings with young people, parents of school children and businesses. We've spoken to people through social media and face-to-face.

Extensive local and community engagement has taken place since the taskforce was established and the views gathered through this engagement have informed this plan.

During the discussions, many people questioned whether their voices would be heard. *Our Valleys, Our Future* is the result of these conversations. We will continue to work with people, businesses and local communities to further develop and deliver this plan.

Details of all future events will be available on our website<sup>1</sup>, Facebook<sup>2</sup> and Twitter<sup>3</sup> pages.



<sup>1</sup> [gov.wales/talkvalleys](https://www.gov.wales/talkvalleys)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/talkvalleys/>

<sup>3</sup> [#talkvalleys](https://twitter.com/wg_communities)



# Priority 1

## Good quality jobs and the skills to do them

*The only jobs in the area are zero-hour contract work or call centre work. There's no chance of a career and progression within your job in the Valleys.*



**Good-quality jobs and the opportunity to develop the skills to get a good job was a clear priority to come out of both the feedback from the public and the evidence the taskforce received. The taskforce was also told that jobs and skills needed to be supported by affordable and accessible public transport.**

The taskforce is determined to close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales – it will work with public and private sector employers to create new fair, secure and sustainable jobs in the Valleys. It will work with the Welsh Government, local government and the city deals to attract new employers to the South Wales Valleys.

To close the current employment gap and ensure employment levels in the South Wales Valleys are the same as the Welsh average will mean we will help around 7,000 unemployed or economically-inactive people living in the Valleys into work (at the current level).

To do this, thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs across the Valleys will be created and there will be support and access to skills and training to help people get a job and stay in well-paid work.

We will take full advantage of the South Wales Metro and other transport infrastructure developments, including the ongoing work to complete the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road. We will work with both the Cardiff Capital Region and Swansea Bay city deals to maximise benefits for people living in the Valleys.



### Vision: by 2021

We will close the employment gap between the South Wales Valleys and the rest of Wales – this means helping an additional 7,000 people into work and that thousands of new, fair, secure and sustainable jobs will be created in the Valleys

People living in the Valleys will have access to the right skills to gain work.

Businesses will be fully supported to grow and thrive in the South Wales Valleys.



You said...	We will...
<p>There aren't enough job opportunities within reach of many Valleys communities.</p> <p>There are too many zero-hours contracts and too much temporary and agency work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore all options to target investment and create new strategic hubs in specific areas across the Valleys. These will be areas where public money is focused to provide opportunities for the private sector to invest and create new jobs. The focus of each hub will reflect the opportunities and demand in a particular area and their aspirations for the future. <b>The hub locations are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pontypridd/Treforest, focusing on residential, office, industrial and retail development</li> <li>• Caerphilly/Ystrad Mynach, focusing on residential, office and industrial development</li> <li>• Cwmbran, focusing on office, industrial and residential development</li> <li>• Merthyr Tydfil, focusing on office, industrial and residential development</li> <li>• Neath, focusing on industrial, residential, digital and energy development.</li> </ul>   <b>We will also create a strategic hub in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ebbw Vale, focusing on a new automotive technology business park, with the potential to support 1,500 new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. This will be backed by £100m of Welsh Government investment over 10 years. The first phase will deliver 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space.</li> <li>• We will introduce programmes to support new and existing employers in Blaenau Gwent with skills development for the local workforce and explore the possibility of locating a South Wales Metro depot in the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Relocate more public sector jobs into the Valleys, including at the six proposed strategic hub locations, where appropriate. For example, Transport for Wales is committed to establishing its new headquarters in Pontypridd.</li> <li>3. Make more publicly-owned land and property available in the Valleys for development.</li> <li>4. Maximise job opportunities in the local foundational economy – businesses we use every day and see all around us, such as retail, care and the food industry.</li> <li>5. Support the creation of more digital jobs in the Valleys and develop two digital technology hubs to help new business start-ups in the sector.</li> <li>6. Roll-out <i>Better Jobs Closer to Home</i> in the Valleys to create real opportunities and decent jobs where the need is greatest. This includes using public procurement to support local businesses and supply chains.</li> <li>7. Exploit the job creation potential from major infrastructure investment, including the South Wales Metro, the M4 and the ongoing work to dual A465 and new affordable housing.</li> <li>8. Maximise the creation of green jobs and business opportunities from investment in energy efficiency through the Welsh Government's <i>Warm Homes</i> programme.</li> </ol>

You said...	We will...
Businesses want more support to set up and grow their businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better align business support for start-ups and existing businesses, encouraging and providing support for potential entrepreneurs. Improve the conversion of initial enquiries into active support which provides employability capacity or new business starts by 25%.</li> <li>2. For 100 of the Valleys businesses with the greatest growth potential, there will be access to a bespoke, integrated package of recruitment, training and business development support to create jobs, increase skill levels of existing staff and boost productivity.</li> </ol>
Do more to help people get the jobs which are available – a school in Caerphilly told the taskforce how it works with local employers to help young people understand work opportunities and what skills and qualifications are needed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide targeted careers advice to help young people to access jobs, particularly in new and growth sectors and also entrepreneurial opportunities. We will fast track the introduction of a new education business exchange service and the introduction of account executives who will work with schools and colleges in the Valleys.</li> <li>2. Provide access to a bespoke package of skills support by expanding employability programmes, which help people who are unemployed into work.</li> <li>3. Provide support and training for people who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive to gain skills to secure a job. We will ensure employment and skills programmes which support those furthest from work are joined-up and we will work with employers to develop social clauses to ensure this happens.</li> <li>4. Deliver a shared apprenticeship model to stimulate the market in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), health, tourism, hospitality, farming, woodland management and micro-hydro technology.</li> <li>5. Create more apprenticeship opportunities, including in the public sector and in the sports and youth work sectors.</li> <li>6. Help students in college, work-based learning and university to maintain and develop their Welsh language skills to meet demand in key sectors, such as health and social care.</li> </ol>
Availability and the cost of childcare in some areas can act as a deterrent to returning to work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start to deliver and test the Welsh Government's <i>childcare offer</i><sup>4</sup> in parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Caerphilly from September 2017. Pilot the offer throughout Blaenau Gwent, focusing on how obstacles to employability created by childcare needs can be broken down.</li> <li>2. Work with the National Day Nurseries Association on a bid to the WCVA's active inclusion fund to encourage people who are economically inactive to take up work placements in day care nurseries.</li> </ol>
There is a lack of consistent, fully-informed careers advice for young people. Young people need “work skills” to ensure they are ready for employment. For example, time-keeping and confidence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As described above, fast-track the introduction of Careers Wales' new education business exchange service in the Valleys in 2017. This will provide information to schools about work experience and other support available from employers.</li> <li>2. Strengthen industry-led engagement in schools and local communities to encourage young people to consider careers in digital industries.</li> <li>3. Work with businesses to understand current and future digital skills needs to ensure skills and apprenticeship schemes meet their needs.</li> </ol>

<sup>4</sup><http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2017/update/?lang=en>

# Priority 2

## Better public services

*There's no consistency with the bus routes – they change the numbers and cancel services without warning.*



**We heard many stories about excellent public services in the Valleys but we also heard that services are not as joined-up as they could be. We were struck by evidence that public bodies are trying to involve people in decisions, which will affect their lives, but we were told by many people that being heard can be a problem.**

You told us that public services need to be more responsive to the needs of local communities and there is a general need to join services up more effectively to maximise their impact, especially as public funding is so tight.

Schools and colleges play a key role – they are absolutely critical in giving children their best start in life and helping them to reach their full potential.

The taskforce wants to see children in the Valleys do better at school and college – we want overall attainment and results to improve and we want the gap between children on free school meals and their classmates to close. We will work with schools, colleges and local communities to make sure that young people can take advantage of all the opportunities open to them.

We don't want people's lives to be blighted by poor physical or mental health – we want health services to be there when people need help but we also want people to understand how to take care of themselves.

We will work with the NHS and social services to provide care as close to home as possible and ensure communities have the skills to lead healthy lives.

Unreliable and uncoordinated public transport across the Valleys can stop people accessing jobs, education, training, and simply meeting friends and family. Many people told us this should be a key priority for the taskforce as so many other priorities depend on good transport links.



### Vision: by 2021

Public services will be working with the third sector and local communities to respond to people's needs.

Support will be available to help people lead healthier lifestyles, improving their physical and mental wellbeing and addressing health inequalities.

Public transport will be joined-up, affordable and help people get to work, school or training and to leisure facilities.

We will improve education outcomes for all children and close the attainment gap.

You said...	We will...
Public services need to be better joined-up.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake ground-breaking work in three Valleys communities – Llanhilleth, Ferndale and Glynneath/Banwen – to look at how services and local delivery can be better joined-up. A senior Welsh Government official will work with established community projects to identify barriers preventing community action from reaching its full potential.  These three pathfinder projects will drive change in the Welsh Government and help improve local services in the three communities.</li> <li>2. Work with local councils to develop a joined-up, responsive early years system, which puts the unique needs of each child at its heart. This will build on the integrated service approach of programmes such as Flying Start.</li> </ol>
Facilities and services for communities should be better used. For example, schools could be used after hours by other public services and third sector organisations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use existing – and create new – community hubs, in which the NHS, social services, schools and job centres work together with the third sector to provide services for local communities. We will work with local communities and local councils to develop these and decide where these will be based.</li> <li>2. Build on the Welsh Government’s <i>21st Century Schools</i> programme to focus on the co-location of services and the community use of school buildings. This will allow schools to be used in a more flexible way so they offer facilities for other public services outside school hours.</li> <li>3. Expand the use of highly-skilled business managers to support and increase connections between local communities and schools.</li> </ol>
Health services need to be better equipped to deal with an aging population. There should also be better join-up between GPs and non-clinical services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Test new approaches to improve access to mental health and personal wellbeing support. This will enable GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local services, provided by community and voluntary sector organisations, which meet a person’s needs.</li> <li>2. Develop training opportunities and career pathways for people living in the Valleys in a range of key health and social services roles, including dental care workers, nursing and health and care support workers. This will help identify where bespoke solutions are needed to address local recruitment challenges.</li> <li>3. Develop a widening access programme for young people from the Valleys who want a career in health and social care, including medicine. This will build on the Seren<sup>5</sup> network.</li> </ol>
People do not feel supported by mental health services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritise the Valleys for the roll-out of the wellbeing bond – a new initiative designed to help increase physical activity and mental wellbeing.</li> <li>2. Promote social prescribing, including piloting new ways to connect people with mental health support, for example, through the arts and culture; sports and active recreation; community choirs and the use of green spaces.</li> </ol>

<sup>5</sup> Seren supports Wales’ brightest sixth formers achieve their academic potential and gain entry to leading universities.

You said...	We will...
<p>Poor quality housing and too many empty properties can have a detrimental impact on the wider community and can be the cause of anti-social behaviour.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with Valleys councils to improve public support for energy conservation and home improvement measures. This will build on work the taskforce heard about from people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf, where home improvement loans of up to £25,000 are available to home-owners, landlords and developers. This has helped to reduce the number of empty homes in the area.</li> </ol>
<p>There continues to be a shortage of good-quality, affordable housing.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the opportunities provided by the South Wales Metro to reinvigorate housing in the Valleys.</li> <li>2. Widen housing choice by unlocking stalled housing sites through joint working with the city deal partnerships.</li> <li>3. Support local builders to build the homes people need through a new partnership between Valleys councils and Finance Wales.</li> <li>4. Explore new housing options in the most disadvantaged communities through joint working between registered social landlords in the Valleys following work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.</li> </ol>
<p>Public transport is disjointed, expensive and prevents people accessing employment, education and training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the proposed South Wales Metro hubs act as key community points, providing a focus for housing, health, education and other public service investments.</li> <li>2. Work with rail and bus providers to ensure public transport throughout the Valleys is more frequent and affordable and that it links to active travel – cycling and walking – as part of the development of the South Wales Metro.</li> <li>3. Improve public transport services to better reflect the needs of local communities and businesses, including people who work irregular and part-time hours.</li> <li>4. Explore the feasibility of expanding a young people’s discounted fare scheme across public transport.</li> <li>5. Pilot new bus routes and expand the availability of community transport across the Valleys. This will build on work in the Cynon Valley, where volunteer-led community transport is helping disabled people.</li> <li>6. Improve the availability of travel information using digital technology, such as apps, as well as traditional methods. This will help people to plan their journeys more effectively.</li> </ol>



# Priority 3

## My local community

*There's a nice walk nearby – by the waterfalls but there's mess everywhere. Teenagers light fires and leave rubbish as they don't have anything else to do.*



**The South Wales Valleys have a long and proud history and are at the heart of Welsh culture. They are home to some of the most distinctive and breath-taking natural landscapes in Wales.**

The Valleys are not a single community but many different and diverse people. These differences were evident as we moved from community to community, speaking to different people and groups. People expressed a range of opinions about where they live – from feeling strong community pride in their local area; speaking about the negative connotations, which have become associated with the Valleys.

But there was widespread agreement that we could do more with the Valleys' natural environment, its culture and heritage so they can be enjoyed more widely by local people and those living further afield. The Valleys' culture and heritage could be the backdrop to a new future for the area.

Projects like the planned new Afan Valley Adventure Resort at the head of the Afan and Llynfi valleys, have the potential to transform the local area for people living nearby and to attract visitors and tourists, while also boosting skills and employment.

This, and other schemes like it, will be key to the development of the Valleys Landscape Park idea, together with smaller-scale projects, including community woodlands.

Some communities told the taskforce they could benefit more from renewable energy developments and others spoke about the need to modernise town centres, moving away from the traditional idea that they should be developed as shopping centres.



### Vision: by 2021

A Valleys Landscape Park will have been set up to help local communities celebrate and maximise the use of the natural resources and heritage.

Valleys town centres will be vibrant places, with attractive green spaces, which support local economies.

The Valleys will be a recognised tourist destination, attracting visitors from across Wales, the UK and beyond.

You said...	We will...
<p>We are not making the most of the rich natural resources and cultural heritage of the Valleys.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the development of a Valleys Landscape Park. This will help local communities to work with the public, private and third sectors to celebrate and maximise the use of the area's natural resources and heritage.</li> </ol> <p><b>Opportunities include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving physical and mental wellbeing</li> <li>• Employment through green infrastructure</li> <li>• Renewable energy schemes</li> <li>• Positively promoting the Valleys as a tourist destination</li> <li>• Creating 21st century homes using local sources of timber</li> <li>• Responding to the challenge of fly-tipping</li> <li>• Supporting the Welsh language.</li> </ul>
<p>Town centres need to be refocused.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure national and local government regeneration strategies challenge the traditional model of the town centre, based on what communities want and need. Support initiatives which promote a mixture of housing, retail, business and green spaces.</li> <li>2. Explore the impact of free car parking on town centres in the Valleys – you told us that Cwmbran Shopping has free car parking every day and this can encourage trade and help town centres compete with out-of-town retail parks.</li> </ol>
<p>Renewable energy provides real opportunities for local communities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the development of locally-owned community renewable energy schemes in the Valleys. We will identify the best opportunities by bringing together local and national agencies to deliver projects.</li> <li>2. Develop new mechanisms for managing and using energy generated through renewable schemes with the ultimate aim of the Valleys powering its own communities.</li> <li>3. Work with local and national partners to tackle fuel poverty in the Valleys and meet decarbonisation targets by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the scale of investment in home energy efficiency by identifying opportunities to encourage and support people who can invest in improving the energy efficiency of their homes;</li> <li>• Promote the support available through the Welsh Government's <i>Warm Homes</i> programme to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of people on low incomes or living in the most deprived communities in the Valleys.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

You said...	We will...
<p>There is a need to increase tourism in the area, focusing on the Valley's heritage and natural beauty.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a new, positive narrative for tourism in the Valleys and identify projects to meet current and future tourism demand, focusing on the landscape, heritage and people. We will build on successful ventures, such as Bike Park Wales which has attracted many visitors to Merthyr Tydfil.</li> <li>2. Identify opportunities to attract new events to the Valleys – sporting events, such as mountain biking and orienteering, and develop existing events, such as the Steelhouse Festival, in Ebbw Vale.</li> </ol>
<p>The physical environment needs to be better maintained and fly-tipping and littering must be tackled.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve the physical environment of communities by investing in green infrastructure.</li> <li>2. Co-ordinate action with local communities and businesses in areas affected by littering and fly-tipping to achieve a rubbish-free environment.</li> </ol>



## Looking forward

***Our Valleys, Our Future* is a high-level action plan setting out the taskforce's priorities, based on the evidence we have heard and feedback from people living and working in the South Wales Valleys.**

We want to hear your views about this plan and about how these priorities can be developed further. Your feedback, views and evidence will help us develop a detailed delivery plan, which will set out:

- How we will achieve these priorities
- Who should be involved
- The expected benefits
- The timescales for completion
- How we will measure success.

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Given the unique features of different communities in the South Wales Valleys, some actions may initially be tailored to particular areas.

We are to develop and deliver a stretching and ambitious work plan, effective delivery will require an ongoing partnership with the public and close working with statutory bodies, particularly local authorities.

The delivery plan will be published in autumn 2017. We want to continue to hear as many views as possible. Details of all future public engagement events will be available on our website<sup>6</sup>, Facebook<sup>7</sup> and Twitter<sup>8</sup> pages.



<sup>6</sup> gov.wales/talkvalleys

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/talkvalleys/>

<sup>8</sup> @wg\_communities #talkvalleys

## Further Information

All inquiries about this plan should be sent to:

Valleys Taskforce  
Education and Public Services  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

email: [talkvalleys@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:talkvalleys@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

[trafodcymoedd@cymru.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:trafodcymoedd@cymru.gsi.gov.uk)

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A summary and a young person's version of this document can be found on our website at the following address: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>

## Related documents

- *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*  
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>
- *Taking Wales Forward 2016 – 2021*  
<http://gov.wales/about/programme-for-government/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Summary of Engagement*  
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Summary of Evidence*  
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>
- *Valleys Taskforce – Context*  
<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/taskforce-for-the-valleys/our-valleys-our-future/?lang=en>



Kirsty Williams AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee  
ELGC(5)-26-17 Papur 4 / Paper 4  
Ein cyf/Our ref MA(P)KW/2659/17

Agenda Item 3.3



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Lynne Neagle AM  
Chair - Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

24<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 26 June about the Children, Young People and Education Committee's forward work programme, asking about the current position regarding community focused schools in Wales.

You asked in particular about the funding provided by Welsh Government to support local authorities in developing community focused approaches in their areas. An element of the previous community focused schools grant was transferred into the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) as part of the wider grant rationalisation process. The SEG was intended to establish and reinforce the community dimension that is essential to school effectiveness. The SEG was subsequently transferred into the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The EIG in turn supports improved outcomes for all learners across the key stages and the majority of the funding is delegated to schools to support our national priorities and regional and local priorities in line with each school's school development plan. Expenditure relating to community focused and school projects remain eligible under the EIG where it supports improved outcomes for learners.

In addition, the childcare element of the Community Focused Schools Grant was renamed as the Out of School Childcare Grant (OSCG) in 2011/12. Since then we have provided an annual allocation of £2.3 million to local authorities through the OSCG to support local authorities in addressing gaps in out of school childcare provision in their areas. The grant is used in a number of ways and varies across local authorities depending on local need, for example it is used to fund the provision of assisted places, sustainability grants, and staff training.

I note the evidence given by the HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. In my school visits across Wales, I have seen many examples of where this good practice takes place on a daily basis. The Welsh Government has long encouraged schools to take a strategic approach to community partnership working -

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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.

which has been proven to support schools' family engagement work, enrich school life and contribute to 'social capital' in many other important ways. This has not changed. Research shows that families of community school pupils have greater communication with teachers and school involvement, and parents/carers demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning success.

Family and community engagement is a cornerstone of the Welsh Government's Rewriting the future programme - our strategy to raise the attainment of learners from deprived backgrounds. If schools can help families and the wider community provide better learning environments and opportunities then they will be far better placed to help children achieve their potential, whatever their background.

Published in June 2015, our Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) guidance contains a toolkit of 25 practical resources for schools, including one on developing community partnerships. Each is designed to encourage reflection and action planning and to provide examples of what other schools have done. The FaCE guidance and toolkit links closely with the Welsh Government's Education Begins at Home campaign which this year has a specific focus how parents and carers can support their child's wellbeing. We will continue to work with consortia, local authorities and schools to promote best practice and consistency of approach in terms of family and community engagement in schools across Wales.

One of Estyn's thematic reviews for this year will focus the preferred communication routes of parents and consider how schools are working to improve their existing lines of communication with parents. A key objective of the report will be to support schools and families to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing by reducing barriers to communication through family engagement. Estyn's review will also share effective practice from schools on effective methods of communication and parental engagement to improve standards and wellbeing.

I am pleased to inform you that Band A of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme will see a £1.4 billion investment in the rebuild and refurbishment of over 150 schools and colleges across Wales over the five year period ending in 2019. During Band A, which runs between 2014 and 2019, local authorities and other delivery partners are encouraged to think innovatively about the provision of services in their area and achieve the best value for money, for example, the opportunity to co-locate services. My officials have also been encouraging local authorities to consider opportunities for community use of assets, for example use of sports facilities.

I am continuing to build on this work and in Band B of the Programme, which is currently under development and will run between 2019 and 2024, one of the two investment objectives is to optimise the use of infrastructure and resources, to deliver public services for our communities by 2024. This will include flexibility of our assets so that space and facilities available for our communities are maximised.

Our aspiration is for all facilities that receive investment commit to making assets available for community use if local demand exists.



In addition, a report 'Increasing the Use of School Facilities' was produced last year by the Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) on how school facilities can be used more extensively by communities. My officials are working to take forward the report recommendations to promote the use of school facilities by communities.

I strongly support the wider community use of our assets, which will help us drive greater value from our investments. It is important that my officials continue to engage with colleagues across our portfolio departments, to ensure we do not overlook any interdependences or opportunities for joined up delivery of support and enabling effort.

Yours sincerely

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

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

**Carl Sargeant AM**  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

8 August 2017

Dear Carl,

**Follow up from general scrutiny session on 20 July**

Thank you for your time in Committee at the end of term. During the course of the meeting you undertook to provide additional written information on the areas below, to supplement your oral evidence:

- The Child's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) process, including the system in place to monitor its use and examples of changes to policy which have occurred as a result of a CRIA;
- The relative independence of Wales' statutory commissioners model as compared with those in other countries (focusing on the Children's Commissioner in particular);
- The timescales to which Children First pioneer areas are working;
- An update on when the childcare workforce strategy will be delivered, and further detail on its content and plan for implementation;
- A note on the work being undertaken by your team in relation to children and young people in preparation for the UK's withdrawal from the EU;
- Details on recent (academic) evaluations of Flying Start and other similar post-code based schemes, with specific comparisons of outcomes for those children who access the schemes and those who do not.

During the course of the session you also undertook to provide early in the autumn term a definitive response to the question of whether you will re-establish a stakeholder advisory group on Advocacy. The Committee looks forward to receiving this information once available.



Further to the session the Committee also wanted to follow-up on the following specific areas:

### **Child poverty**

As discussed in Committee, progress in tackling child poverty at a Wales level will now be assessed using the 46 National Indicators underpinning the *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, in addition to a report every three years on the extent to which objectives in the Child Poverty Strategy have been achieved, as required by the *Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010*.

In response to the consultation on the National Indicators during the Fourth Assembly, as Minister for Natural Resources, you issued a written statement which stated:

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In terms of the responses around ensuring we are capturing the well-being of children, we accept that this is important for understanding the well-being of future generations... However, many of the areas of subjective well-being are captured through the National Survey for Wales which does not cover children, and it will be for the next government to consider options for how this can be collected in the future. **(17 March 2016)**

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As Child Poverty now resides within your Cabinet portfolio, the Committee would welcome further information on action taken by the Welsh Government to address this discrepancy, to ensure the collection and analysis of children's subjective well-being informs the approach to empowering resilient communities.

### **Childcare offer**

The Committee noted the steps being taken to deliver the manifesto pledge relating to the childcare offer in Wales. As a Committee we intend to keep a close eye on the extent to which delivery of this pledge will impact on other important policy priorities for children and young people.

### **Communities First**

Since our general scrutiny session you have received the recommendations made by the Equalities, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee's Inquiry into learning the lessons from Communities First. Recommendation 1 of that report aligns with our discussion in Committee, which explored how the Welsh Government is working with local authorities to support the continuation of the most effective Communities First programmes for children and young people.

As you are aware, the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) undertaken during the decision making process to phase out Communities First highlights that 207



of the 647 (32%) Communities First projects in 2016-17, are focused particularly on children and young people. The CRIA further states that to mitigate the impact following the decision to phase out Communities First, local authorities will be expected to produce exit strategies and Welsh Government officials will work closely with them on developing and delivering these strategies to maintain valued services, including those for children, young people and their families.

Where there is evidence of existing Communities First projects benefiting children and young people, the Committee believes that all opportunities should be taken by the Welsh Government to ensure that their activity continues. The Committee was concerned to hear you say in your evidence that the continuation of projects currently delivering services for children and young people will be a matter for the local authority to deal with locally. We concur with ELGC Committee's recommendation that the Welsh Government should work with local authorities to identify all programmes currently delivered by Communities First which should be delivered by other statutory bodies, and that responsibility for those programmes which are successful and are valued by local communities is transferred to the relevant statutory body.

Where there is no obvious statutory provider to deliver services, we also support recommendation 11 from ELGC Committee's report, which encourages adjustments be made to relevant Welsh Government programmes to mitigate against unintended consequences from the closure of Communities First. The Committee would welcome an update on your response to the ELGC Committee's recommendations in those areas which relate to children and young people.

## **Children's rights**

The continued importance of embedding and strengthening children's rights across all government policy and legislation remains a key concern for the Committee. We remain to be convinced that:

- the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFGA) alone is sufficient for ensuring that due regard is paid to the rights of children, especially as it does not include an explicit legal duty of due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);
- the UNCRC does not need to be extended to domestic legislation, such as the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill currently before the Committee. As set out in the [Committee's Stage 1 report](#) on the Bill (paragraph 282 and recommendation 31), the Committee believes that it is vital that the UNCRC filters down through policies to those responsible for delivery 'on the ground', and that the principles of the Convention are understood in the delivery of duties. The Committee believes that the Bill should include a specific duty on relevant bodies to have due regard to the UNCRC.

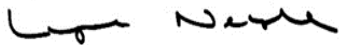




During our session you noted that you maintained an open mind on amending existing legislation if it was identified as an issue in the January 2018 Compliance Report on the children's rights scheme. We look forward to receiving an update on developments in this regard once the Compliance Report is available.

The Committee would be grateful for a response by **Tuesday 12 September** to inform its work over the next term. I will share a copy of this letter with the ELGC Committee given the relevance of certain aspects to its portfolio.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AC / AM**  
**Cadeirydd / Chair**



**Kirsty Williams AM**  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

24 July 2017

Dear Kirsty,

### **Legislative Consent Memorandum: Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**

The Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the UK Government's Financial Guidance and Claims Bill – laid by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant AM – was referred by the Business Committee to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee and the Equalities, Local Government and Communities (ELGC) Committee earlier this month for consideration.

The CYPE Committee gave initial consideration to the LCM on 20 July. It concentrated its consideration on areas of relevance to its remit – the provision of financial education to children and young people.

In order to inform its report, the CYPE Committee has written to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to request more detailed information on the following points:

- the reasons why the Welsh Government considers it appropriate for the Single Financial Guidance Body, rather than an appropriate Welsh body/organisation, to have responsibility for creating a strategy to improve the provision of financial education to children and young people in Wales;
- how the Welsh Government anticipates it will work in practice with the Single Financial Guidance Body in relation to the provision of financial education of children and young people in Wales.

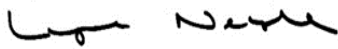
Given the direct relevance of the points above to your portfolio, the Committee would welcome a response to both from you by **25 August 2017**. It would also welcome your view on how the planned UK-wide strategy would fit with the development of the new Curriculum for Wales and in particular the Government's wish to avoid its piecemeal reform. The Committee would also be grateful if you



could briefly set out what is known at this stage on how financial education will be provided under the new Curriculum for Wales.

I have shared a copy of this letter with the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children and the Chair of the ELGC Committee given their interest in this LCM.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AC / AM**  
**Cadeirydd / Chair**



**Carl Sargeant AM**

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

24 July 2017

Dear Carl,

### **Legislative Consent Memorandum: Financial Guidance and Claims Bill**

As you will be aware the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the UK Government's Financial Guidance and Claims Bill was referred by the Business Committee to the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee earlier this month for consideration.

The Committee gave initial consideration to the LCM on 20 July. It concentrated its consideration on areas of relevance to its remit – the provision of financial education to children and young people.

In order to inform its report, the Committee would be grateful if you could provide more detailed information about:

- the reasons why the Welsh Government considers it appropriate for the Single Financial Guidance Body, rather than an appropriate Welsh body/organisation, to have responsibility for creating a strategy to improve the provision of financial education to children and young people in Wales;
- how the Welsh Government anticipates it will work in practice with the Single Financial Guidance Body in relation to the provision of financial education of children and young people in Wales.

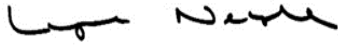
The Committee would be grateful to receive this information by **25 August 2017**.

I am also writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Education given the relevance of this issue to her portfolio. I enclose a copy of that letter for your information. I have



copied the Chair of the ELGC Committee into both letters in order to inform that Committee's consideration of the LCM.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynne Neagle".

**Lynne Neagle AC / AM**  
**Cadeirydd / Chair**



Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee  
ELGC(5)-26-17 Papur 8 / Paper 8

Carl Sargeant AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

28 July 2017

Dear Carl

## Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill

You will be aware that on 11 July 2017, the Business Committee referred the Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for consideration. As elements of the LCM fall within the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's remit, the LCM was considered at the Committee's meeting on 19 July.

During its consideration of the LCM the Committee agreed to write to you to seek clarification on why the UK Government believes that legislation on this matter is needed. The Committee also wishes to seek clarification on the extent to which the provisions identified in the LCM under Education and Training; Social Welfare; and Economic development are within the Assembly's legislative competence.



I would be grateful if you could respond by **Monday 11 September 2017**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The letters are cursive and connected.

John Griffiths AM  
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.





Ein cyf/Our ref MA/CS/0483/17

John Griffiths AM  
Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

23 August 2017

Dear John

Thank you for your letter of 28 July regarding the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) on the UK Government's Financial Guidance and Claims Bill ('the Bill').

The UK Government has stated that legislation on this matter is needed in order to ensure that members of the public are able to access free and impartial money guidance, pension and debt advice. These are currently provided by three publicly funded services – the Money Advice Service, the Pensions Advisory Service, and Pension Wise. Following a series of consultations, the UK Government concluded that the best way of addressing the issue is to create a new statutory Single Financial Guidance Body ('SFGB') providing advice in one place, aiming to reduce duplication and deliver and commission specific services to ensure that as many people as possible receive high quality, impartial financial guidance.

A LCM is required as the provisions within Part 1 of the Bill fall within the National Assembly for Wales' legislative competence pursuant to subject 5 Education and Training, subject 15 Social Welfare and subject 4 Economic Development within Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006, as the Bill establishes the SFGB which has functions of pensions guidance, debt advice, money guidance and strategic financial capability to enable people to access the advice and help they need to make informed financial decisions.

The Bill also proposes that funds for debt advice should be transferred to the Devolved Administrations enabling them to commission services locally to help individuals manage debt. The proposal to devolve the funding for debt advice service provision to the Devolved Administrations is to be welcomed as it will enable the Welsh Government to develop a strategic and integrated approach to the commissioning of debt advice services in Wales alongside other areas of social welfare advice services including housing, welfare benefits, employment and discrimination.

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[Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@gov.wales)

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

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



This approach is also aligned with the aims of the Welsh Government's Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan and the Information and Advice Action Plan, published in December 2016, which encourage the development of a funding model for social welfare advice that merges together problem solving interventions with activities that aim to help people become more resilient in preventing similar problems reoccurring.

With regard to money guidance, the Bill provides for money guidance to be provided by the SFGB on a UK wide basis, with a duty upon the SFGB to work closely with the Devolved Administrations to represent their interests and needs in relation to the delivery of money and pensions guidance, including the commissioning, designing and delivering of services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carl Sargeant'.

**Carl Sargeant AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



**Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP**  
Secretary of State for Wales  
Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

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Y Swyddfa Breifat  
**18 SEP 2017**  
PO 262  
Private Office

Elin Jones AM  
Presiding Officer  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Ref: 414SUB 17

*17<sup>th</sup>* September 2017

*Alun Cairns*

**Wales Act 2017: Principal Appointed Day (PAD)**

Further to your letter of 18 August, I am writing to confirm that I am content for the Principal Appointed Day (PAD) to be the 1 April 2018. I have instructed my officials to proceed on that basis. They will of course work closely with your officials to ensure a smooth transition to the new devolution settlement.

I am copying this letter to the First Minister and have written to him in similar terms.

*Alun Cairns*

**Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP**  
Secretary of State for Wales  
Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

Carl Sargeant AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA - L/CS/0496/17

Huw Irranca-Davies AM  
Chair, Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

12<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Huw

## **ABOLITION OF THE RIGHT TO BUY AND ASSOCIATED RIGHTS (WALES) BILL**

I would like to thank you and your colleagues on the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, for your consideration of the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill during Stage 1 scrutiny.

I have considered carefully the recommendations contained in the Committee's report and my response to each one is set out below:

**Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Cabinet Secretary should fully explain during the Stage 1 debate his reasons for introducing a Bill that amends existing UK legislation rather than one that is consolidated and free-standing.**

As I explained during the debate on 18 July, the Bill abolishes the right to buy, which was established in England and Wales by legislation dating back to 1985. In order to do this, it has to amend existing England and Wales legislation so far as it applies to Wales.

To combine these necessary amendments with freestanding, independent provision, in the Bill, would require very extensive re-statement of the law relating to the right to buy for a temporary period only – in a Bill whose whole purpose is to abolish the right rather than to make provision about it. However, the Welsh Government remains committed to promoting the accessibility and coherence of bilingual Welsh law.

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[Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@gov.wales)

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

**Pack Page 59**

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.

**Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Cabinet Secretary should table an amendment to the Bill to place an absolute duty on the Welsh Ministers to provide every qualifying landlord based in Wales with a copy of the information document set out in section 8.**

I have re-considered this recommendation following the General Principles debate. However, I remain of the view that there is no need for an absolute duty as the Welsh Government is fully aware of all the qualifying landlords based in Wales and will be contacting them accordingly.

**Recommendation 3. We recommend that the existing qualified duty on the Welsh Ministers to provide every qualifying landlord with a copy of the information document (section 8(1)(c)) should only apply to landlords based outside of Wales, and that the Cabinet Secretary should table an amendment to the Bill to that effect.**

I do not consider that the Bill should be amended so that the existing qualified duty to inform landlords only applies to landlords based outside Wales. The current drafting recognises that the Welsh Government is reliant on a third party (the Homes and Communities Agency) to provide us with details of social landlords, based outside Wales, which own homes for rent in Wales.

As I mentioned in the General Principles debate, the matters covered in recommendations 2 and 3 from your Committee were also considered by the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee who are content with the current provisions in the Bill. I do not, therefore, propose to bring forward any amendments on these matters.

**Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Cabinet Secretary should table an amendment to the Bill to delete the words “or expedient” from section 9.**

Section 9 of the Bill confers power on the Welsh Ministers to make consequential etc provision if they consider it “necessary or expedient” to do so in consequence of provision made by the Bill, or made under it. The word “expedient” has its own meaning and allows for amendments which may be desirable, useful or have a practical benefit, but which may fail a strict “necessity” test. For instance, if a power to make consequential amendments was used to streamline an administrative procedure which was proving difficult to apply, or impractical for tenants to deal with, it might be arguable that this did not meet the “necessity” test, in that the tenants could simply live with the difficulty, undesirable though this might be. This approach would be unduly inflexible and restrictive and could prevent beneficial changes being made.

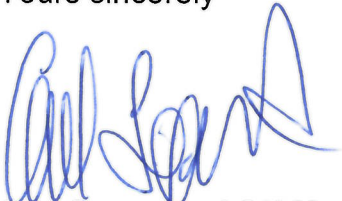
I do not, therefore, propose to bring forward an amendment on this matter.

**Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Cabinet Secretary should table an amendment to the Bill to make it clear that section 10(1) applies only to the regulation-making power in section 9.**

I consider that the amendment, recommended by the Committee, would clarify the scope of the regulation making power in section 10(1) and improve the Bill as a result. I am grateful for the Committee’s recommendation on this matter and will bring forward an amendment at Stage 2 to remove any ambiguity concerning the wording of section 10(1).

In conclusion, I hope this letter is helpful in setting out the Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report and I would like to repeat my thanks to Members for their detailed consideration of the Bill.

Yours sincerely



**Carl Sargeant AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children





Carl Sargeant AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA - L/CS/0496/17

Simon Thomas AM  
Chair  
Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

12th September 2017

Dear Simon

### **ABOLITION OF THE RIGHT TO BUY AND ASSOCIATED RIGHTS (WALES) BILL**

I would like to thank you and your colleagues on the Finance Committee for your consideration of the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill during Stage 1 scrutiny.

I have considered carefully the views expressed in the report and will publish updated financial information in the revised Explanatory Memorandum following completion of Stage 2 proceedings. I will ensure that a copy of the revised Memorandum is sent to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

**Carl Sargeant AC/AM**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

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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.

**Pack Page 63**

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# Agenda Item 7

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

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