

# Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 15 January 2019

Meeting time: 09.17 – 10.31

This meeting can be viewed  
on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/5071>

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## Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	David J Rowlands AM (Chair) Janet Finch-Saunders AM Mike Hedges AM Neil McEvoy AM Leanne Wood AM
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Ross Davies (Deputy Clerk) Kathryn Thomas (Deputy Clerk) Lisa Salkeld (Legal Adviser)

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

The Chair expressed condolences on behalf of the Committee to the family and friends of the late Steffan Lewis AM who passed away on 11 January 2019, and invited the Committee to take a few moments of reflection.



## **2 New petitions**

### **2.1 P-05-853 No to any Closure of Junction 41**

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Minister for Economy and Transport to ask what assessment has been made of the potential impact of increased vehicle emissions along local roads if a partial or full closure of Junction 41 is implemented, and whether relevant data on emissions was collected as part of the previous trial closure.

### **2.2 P-05-854 Make learning disability training mandatory for hospital staff**

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- write back to the Minister for Health and Social Services to request further details about the work being carried out in hospital settings under the Improving Lives Programme, the priorities of the Ministerial Advisory Group, and to ask for the Government's view on the value of making training about learning disabilities mandatory for hospital staff; and
- seek further information about the UK Government's consultation on proposals for mandatory learning disability training for all health and care staff in England.

### **2.3 P-05-858 Fire sprinklers are for life, not a fast buck!**

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await the views of the petitioner on the response received from the Welsh Government before considering whether to take further action on the petition.

### **2.4 P-05-859 Provide Child Houses in Wales for victims of child sexual abuse**

Neil McEvoy declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He is a local councillor and has been involved with individual cases.

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- write to:
  - the Children’s Commissioner for Wales to ask for her views on the petition, further information about the relevant recommendations she made in her Annual Report 2017/18 and the Welsh Government’s response, and her view about the petitioner’s call for places where children can go to escape sexual abuse; and
  - the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask what facilities are available in Wales for the safeguarding of children who are reporting and escaping from sexual abuse;
  - seek an update on whether the review of advice services set up by the previous First Minister is still ongoing.

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

#### **3.1 P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Education and agreed to:

- request additional information from the evaluation of fixed penalty notices for nonattendance, including about the number of fines issued and the sums of money involved; and
- continue to keep a watching brief on the issue and consider the petition again when the revised school attendance framework is published for consultation later in 2019.

#### **3.2 P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Education and agreed to:

- request additional information from the evaluation of fixed penalty notices for nonattendance, including about the number of fines issued and the sums of money involved; and continue to keep a watching brief on the issue and consider the petition again when the revised school attendance framework is published for consultation later in 2019.

### **3.3 P-05-828 Presumption in favour of rural schools**

The Committee considered the petition and agreed to write to the Minister for Education to:

- ask what the Welsh Government's intentions are in circumstances where local authorities do not follow the requirements School Organisation Code; and
- seek clarification about what powers she has to intervene in decisions on school closures including at what point, and under what circumstances, she is able to intervene.

### **3.4 P-05-805 Fair Deal For Supply Teachers**

Neil McEvoy declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A: he has previously worked as a supply teacher.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Education together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to:

- write to the Minister for Education to:
  - seek a response to the further questions asked by the petitioners;
  - ask her to clarify why she does not currently consider it suitable to have a regional or locally-based public sector solution to the provision of supply teachers; and
- request a legal note on the Welsh Government's powers to direct school governing bodies or local authorities to employ supply staff directly.

### **3.5 P-05-848 Let Welsh students have the opportunity to choose the best study option for them**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Education together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to close the petition, in light of the unambiguous response received from the Minister for Education, and the fact that there appears to be little realistic prospect of change to this aspect of student funding policy.

### **3.6 P-04-648 Unconventional Oil and Gas Planning Applications**

The Committee considered a written statement on Petroleum Extraction Policy and agreed to ask the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to confirm the Committee's understanding that the Welsh Government would 'call in' any new application for a license to extract petroleum, if the relevant local authority intended to approve it.

### **3.7 P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales**

Janet Finch Saunders declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

She has previously been involved with the pet trade.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs and agreed to ask for a briefing on the differences between regulations on the sale of exotic pets in Wales and England.

### **3.8 P-05-816 Say 'NO' to pheasant shooting on Welsh public land**

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs and agreed to close the petition, in light of the NRW Board's decision not to offer any extension to the leases for pheasant shooting rights once they expire in March 2019, following the Welsh Government's intervention. In doing so, the Committee wished to congratulate the petitioners on the success of their campaign.

### **3.9 P-05-825 Protect children's lungs from harmful pollution whilst at school**

The Committee considered correspondence from the petitioner and agreed to:

- write to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to seek a response to the suggestion that powers over anti-idling zones should be devolved to local authorities, and the concerns raised that local authorities have insufficient resources to carry out adequate monitoring and improvement of local air quality; and
- write to the Future Generations Commissioner to seek her views on the issues raised by the petition and what powers she has in relation to addressing the effects of air pollution on children.

### **3.10 P-05-852 Introduce a Licence to manage land for game bird shooting in an attempt to end raptor persecution**

The Committee considered correspondence from the petitioner and agreed to provide this to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, seek her view on the matters raised, and request a copy of the report 'A Review of the Prevention and Investigation of Wildlife Crime in Wales'.

### **3.11 P-05-804 We need Welsh Government funding for play!!**

The Committee considered correspondence from the petitioner and agreed to write to:

- the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask for an update on the funding for play in the context of the budget for 2019/20; and
- Play Wales to seek their views on the issue raised by the petition, information about their reviews of Play Sufficiency Assessments and Action Plans, and for their response to the comments made by the petitioners over their social campaign.

### **3.12 P-05-846 Save our Hospital at Prince Philip Llanelli**

The Committee considered correspondence from Hywel Dda University Health Board, together with further comments from the petitioners, and agreed to invite the petitioners to attend a future Committee meeting to explore their concerns over proposals relating to Prince Philip Hospital in more detail.

### **3.13 P-05-775 Put an end to the Cross Border and Sub-contracting Taxi Licensing loophole.**

Mike Hedges declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He has family and friends who work in the taxi industry.

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to supply the information received from the petitioners to the Minister for Economy and Transport in light of the public consultation on the White Paper on Improving Public Transport, and ask:

- whether the Welsh Government would consider limiting or preventing cross border working in the event that it decides not to establish a single national licensing authority following the consultation; and
- whether and how, if a national licensing authority is established, it could control the number of taxis and private hire vehicles operating in a given area.

### **3.14 P-05-835 Allow Free Movement of Taxi Drivers to Carry Out Private Hire Work Anywhere in Wales**

Mike Hedges declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He has family and friends who work in the taxi industry.

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to supply the information received from the petitioners to the Minister for Economy and Transport in light of the public consultation on the White Paper on Improving Public Transport, and ask:

- whether the Welsh Government would consider limiting or preventing cross border working in the event that it decides not to establish a single national licensing authority following the consultation; and
- whether and how, if a national licensing authority is established, it could control the number of taxis and private hire vehicles operating in a given area.

### **3.15 P-05-798 Male domestic violence victim support services to be independently run & funded**

Neil McEvoy declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He is a former service user of FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru.

The Committee considered correspondence from the then Leader of the House together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to:

- write to Safer Wales to seek their response to the concerns raised over their approach to 'screening' male victims; and
- await the publication of the regional commissioning guidance before considering the petition again.