

To whom it may concern

29 March 2019

Impact of Welfare Conditionality project

I am the Chair of the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee. We are a cross party committee made up of elected Assembly Members from across Wales. More information can be found on our [website](#).

Our remit is to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing (but not restricted to): local government; housing, community regeneration, cohesion and safety; tackling poverty; equality of opportunity and human rights.

At the start of the Assembly, we identified poverty as a key area for our five year term. We have undertaken a range of work looking at the different aspects of poverty in Wales. As part of this, the Welfare Conditionality Project provided written and oral evidence in 2017 to our inquiry on [Making the Economy work for people on low incomes](#). Additionally, I met with the Director in 2018 to discuss the project's final findings.

One of our strands of investigation in this inquiry was the role welfare benefits play in supporting people on low incomes, and it was here where the Welfare Conditionality's evidence played an important role. In fact their evidence was our key source in coming to our conclusions on this element of the work.

We took oral evidence from Dr Sharon Wright and Dr Lisa Scullion on 21 September 2017. As a direct result of the evidence they gave, [we wrote](#) to the UK Government outlining our concerns about a number of elements about the implementation of Universal Credit. Also partly as a result of this evidence, in a



separate inquiry into rough sleeping, we recommended that the Welsh Government consider seeking powers over the administration of Universal Credit akin to those in Scotland.

In the making the economy work report, we built on this recommendation and called for the Welsh Government to undertake and publish an analysis of the benefits and risk of devolving these powers.

While both these recommendations were rejected by the Welsh Government at the time, there has subsequently been a shift in the view of the Welsh Government, which may be partly a result of a change in First Minister. In responding to a question I asked in First Minister's Questions in January this year, the new First Minister said he felt that the time had come to start exploring the case for further devolution.

Partly as a result of the evidence we received from the Welfare Conditionality project, we have now decided to do a further piece of work, exploring how devolution of some powers over welfare benefits could work, and what benefits or risks that would bring. I have no doubt that as part of this work, we will again seek to draw on the excellent work of the Welfare Conditionality project.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

