

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

17 February 2022

Dear Jenny and Jayne,

Thank you for writing to me setting out the concerns raised by the Children's Commissioner in respect of her budget settlement for the 2022-23 financial year.

I would like to offer my assurance that the budget estimate was not rejected. I considered the budget estimate as part of the draft budget settlement and awarded an indicative 2022-23 grant allocation of £1,580,000. I can also assure you that as a government, we are committed to assessing and understanding the impacts of our spending decisions, through a Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment of the draft budget, of which children's rights is a part.

In the tight settlement for 2022-23, Programme for Government (PfG) commitments were prioritised and I agreed to maintain a flat line budget for the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW) and all other Commissioners within my portfolio. However, I recognised the way the Children's Commissioner had systemically reduced her reserves alongside maintaining high performance.

My officials have been in discussion with CCfW's office since the original announcement. I am pleased to inform you that I wrote to the Children's Commissioner on 26 January confirming that an additional £115k has been allocated for the 2022-23 financial year. The Office of the Children's Commissioner will therefore receive a revenue budget of £1,695,000 in 2022-23.

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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.

This funding will be reviewed ahead of budget allocations being agreed for years two (2023-24) and three (2024-25). This will provide an opportunity for the incoming CCfW, Rocio Cifuentes, who begins her term in April 2022, to consider her requirements for future years.

Yours sincerely

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

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Social Justice

Minister for Social Justice  
Jane Hutt MS

Cc Children's Commissioner for Wales  
Sally Holland

31 January 2022

## **The Children's Commissioner for Wales' 2022-23 Budget Estimate**

Dear Jane,

The Children's Commissioner for Wales ("the Commissioner") has written to both of us to set out her concerns about her office's budget settlement for the 2022-23 financial year and projected settlement for the subsequent two years. The Commissioner appended to her letter the statutory budget estimate that her office submitted to the Welsh Government in October 2021.

The letter sets out that the Commissioner requested a total resource budget of £1,695,765 for the 2022-23 financial year, £1,652,444 for 2023-24, and £1,662,001 for 2024-25. However, the Welsh Government rejected this estimate and proposed a resource budget of £1,580,000 for 2022-23 and a "projected 'flat budget' for the two subsequent years as well". The Commissioner sets out her concerns with the Welsh Government's proposed budget, before adding that she has "asked the Government for a substantive response as to how the decision was reached to continue providing the same settlement as previous years during a period where costs outside the accounting officer's control are rising."

It is not appropriate for us to comment on the precise levels of funding that the Children's Commissioner for Wales receives from the Welsh Government. Neither is it appropriate for us to take action on behalf of any commissioner unless we wish to do so.

However, we are concerned about the potential implications of the Commissioner's funding settlement for children and children's rights. Particularly, the Commissioner's assertions that the proposed settlement will:



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- restrict the ability of the Commissioner to set an independent work programme covering all of the areas that are important to children and young people in Wales today, and fulfilling the legal remit of the post;
- impair the Commissioner's office's capacity to provide advice to the Welsh Government on behalf of children and with the interests of promoting children's rights, particularly if, as in the Commissioner's view, "there is limited expertise within the Government to perform such an expert role"; and
- negatively impact on the Welsh Government's delivery of its Programme for Government insofar as it relates to children and young people.

Please can you:

1. clarify why the Welsh Government rejected the Commissioner's budget estimate; share with the Committee the Children's Rights Impact Assessment for your decision; and
2. provide your assurances in relation to each of the three bullet points above that your proposed budget settlement will not adversely impact the ability of the new Children's Commissioner for Wales to fulfil her statutory and wider advocacy and advisory roles?
- 3.

We would be grateful for your response no later than Monday 28 February.

I have copied this letter to the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

