

Jane Hutt MS  
Minister for Social Justice

5 May 2022

Dear Jane

### Debt and the Pandemic

Thank you for your letter of 31 March including an update relating to recommendation 2 of our report on Debt and the Pandemic, which we noted on 25 April.

We welcomed the information you provided resulting from the research exercise and we would be grateful if you could continue to keep us informed as this work progresses.

However, we were surprised to note the lack of available data on the relationship between debt and alcohol addiction and/or substance misuse. We consider this to be an area of key concern, particularly in light of the current cost-of-living crisis impacting households and the potential for further difficulties as a result. We would therefore ask if you could set out what action can be taken to look at further research on this issue, including using the Equality and Data Evidence Unit to gather data.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee