

CYPE(6)-04-22 - Paper to note 21

Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

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;
2. share with the Committee the Children's Rights Impact Assessment for your decision; and
3. 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?

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.

