

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus a
Gweinyddiaeth Gyhoeddus**

**Public Accounts and Public
Administration Committee**

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair – Children, Young People and Education Committee

1 August 2023

Civil service capacity

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 22 June 2023 setting out the concerns of the Children, Young People and Education Committee about the capacity of the Civil Service under the portfolio of the Minister for Health and Social Services and her deputies.

The Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee share similar concerns regarding the wider capacity and capability of the Civil Service in Wales.

We recently considered the Auditor General for Wales report on the [Welsh Government's workforce planning](#) which was published on 8 September 2022. We took evidence on the report's contents, alongside our scrutiny of the Accounts for 2021-22, which we are due to report on before the end of the summer recess.

The Auditor General's report considered whether the Welsh Government had a sound approach to workforce planning, reflecting on operational workforce planning, the emerging approach to strategic workforce planning and the response to current workforce needs.

We agreed with the findings of the Auditor General that the Welsh Government should prioritise the development of its workforce strategy and Delegation and Accountability Framework. We were especially concerned that the Welsh Government is overly reliant on expensive temporary staffing solutions, including agency staff on fixed-term contracts, to meet staffing pressures.

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN
SeneddCCGG@Senedd.cymru
senedd.cymru/SeneddCCGG
0300 200 6565

Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN
SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales
senedd.wales/SeneddPAPA
0300 200 6565

The Public Accounts Committee of the Fifth Senedd raised similar concerns with the Welsh Government during its scrutiny of the 2019-20 Accounts, and whilst it is encouraging that the use of Temporary Duties Allowances (TDAs) and Temporary Promotion Allowance (TPAs) is decreasing, more must be done to ensure that departments are able to be agile in their recruitment of suitable staff. The Committee hopes that the implementation of a substantive work plan can lessen the Welsh Government's reliance on temporary solutions, whilst appreciating that they will be necessary, and valuable, in some instances.

The evidence we heard from the Permanent Secretary suggests that a lack of specialist legal and policy staff could affect the delivery of the Programme for Government and is a troubling indication of the skill gaps within the organisation. We are concerned about how the Welsh Government will address these skill gaps within its workforce to ensure that the correct expertise is in place to deliver its functions.

In our report we will note the concerns raised in your letter and will continue to monitor these issues in future accounts scrutiny. Our report will also be making a number of recommendations to the Welsh Government in relation to its workforce planning and we will be keeping a watching brief over these matters.

I will ensure a copy of our report is shared with you upon publication.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Isherwood', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Mark Isherwood MS

Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee