

Senedd Cross Party Group on Human Rights

Meeting, online, 18th September 2024, 12 pm by zoom

In attendance:

In accordance with the CPG practice, only speakers leading on agenda items, the secretary and Senedd Members or their staff are expressly noted as having attended the meeting.

- Sioned Willaims MS, Chair.
- Professor Simon Hoffman, Secretary.
- Elinor Matthey, Bevan Foundation (item 3).
- Charles Whitmore, Cardiff University/WCVA (item 5).

The meeting was attended by various representatives of civil society organizations and networks working in Wales.

Matters Arising

From meeting in July 2024:

The Chair noted that a letter had been sent on 8th July to the Cabinet Secretary, Lesley Griffiths MS, at the request of the Cross Party Group on Human Rights, seeking confirmation of an ongoing commitment to incorporation of human rights. A response had been received from Jane Hutt MS, on 24th July. The tone of the letter was generally supportive of incorporation, but was vague as to how this might be progressed. Both letters have been circulated to members of the Cross Party Group.

Update by Bevan Foundation on progress on issue of 'No Recourse to Public Funds'

Elinor Matthey attended from the Bevan Foundation and provided the following by way of update:

- Welsh Government has reiterated its policy on free school meals.
- There are mechanisms for children with no recourse to public funds to obtain support, but they fail to acknowledge that these are at discretion of local authorities – a postcode lottery.
- There is a much stronger call now we have labour in Westminster – children can benefit from this in England, so this has increased pressure on Welsh Government to keep up with progress.
- Bevan Foundation will be writing to First Minister and Cab Sec Social Justice at start of challenge poverty week. Press release, campaign – call for free school meals. Open to sign ups.

ACTION: Information re above to be circulated amongst civil society members.

ACTION: CPG send a follow-up letter during challenge poverty week to Cab Sec MSJ.

Information on template for collating evidence for Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Simon Hoffman gave a short presentation on a template prepared by the coordinators of the Human Rights Stakeholder Group. This will be circulated amongst civil society organisations to gather evidence for reporting to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The intention is to collate existing evidence on key priorities identified by stakeholders. The date for return of the template is 15th November 2024.

Update on work of Legislative Options Working Group

Charles Whitmore informed the group that the LOWG has developed a template to be used to determine whether specific rights set out in international human rights treaties are capable of incorporation within the scope of Welsh devolution. Charles presented the template to the group and went through it explain the purpose of each part.

The key issue moving forward is whether LOWG is adequately resourced to undertake the work of completing the template, in particular to determine which rights under CEDAW and the UNCRPD may be incorporated.

ACTION: it was agreed that the Chair would write to the Cabinet Secretary urging the Welsh Government to support civil society members of LOWG with resources to enable completion of the template.

There followed a general discussion on progress on incorporation of human rights and possible next steps.

Date of next meeting: members to be notified