

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a
Gofal Cymdeithasol**

—

**Health and Social Care
Committee**

Jeremy Miles MS

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Dawn Bowden MS

Minister for Children and Social Care

Sarah Murphy MS

Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

23 October 2024

Dear Ministers

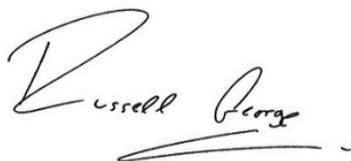
Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26

In line with our usual practice, I am writing in advance of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2025-26 to request written information to inform our scrutiny.

We note the Welsh Government's intention to publish the Draft Budget on Tuesday 10 December 2024, and will be inviting you to attend an oral evidence session early in the new year. The clerk will liaise with your offices about dates.

To assist in our scrutiny, I would be grateful to receive your response to the issues outlined in the annex to this letter, and any other written information you would like to provide, by **Friday 13 December 2024**.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

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

Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

Seneddlechyd@senedd.cymru

senedd.cymru/Seneddlechyd

0300 200 6565

—

Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

SeneddHealth@senedd.wales

senedd.wales/SeneddHealth

0300 200 6565

Annex: request for information from the Welsh Government to inform scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26

Prioritisation

1. Details of the approach taken by Welsh Government to prioritise areas of spending, across the whole budget and within health and social care. (The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Cabinet Office has said the next Welsh Government budget will “once again be very challenging, and we will have to focus on our most important priorities, and there simply won't be enough money to meet all of the pressures that we face”).

Waiting times

2. Allocations to support the programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing NHS waiting lists.

Mental health

3. A breakdown of allocations to improve mental health and wellbeing in Wales, including allocations to:
 - support implementation of the Welsh Government’s new mental health and suicide prevention strategies;
 - improve access to mental health services and outcomes for both adults and children and young people.

Workforce

4. Allocations to support implementation of the 10-year strategy for the health and social care workforce and the national workforce implementation plan, including specific reference to retention and staff wellbeing.

Primary care

5. How the budget will support delivery of the Welsh Government’s commitment to reform primary care, and the shift of more care out of hospitals into primary care/community settings.

Service transformation

6. How this budget will balance the need to meet immediate/short-term pressures (e.g. the waiting times backlog, workforce shortages) with longer-term service transformation.

Prevention

7. Has there been a shift of resources towards prevention/early intervention. Where in the budget can this be seen.

Estates and infrastructure

8. Capital and revenue allocations to develop, improve, and maintain NHS estates and infrastructure, including digital infrastructure.

Health inequalities

9. Evidence of a cross-government approach to tackling inequalities and the wider determinants of health, and that 'population health' is a consideration across government department budgets.
10. How the impact of funding allocations on different groups/communities has been taken into account during the development of the budget proposals.

Women's health

11. How the budget will support women's health, including details of the funding that has been allocated to support the 10-year delivery stage of the women's health plan.

Assessing impact/value for money

12. The mechanisms in place (within the health and care system and at Welsh Government level) to assess whether spending by health boards/trusts and local authorities is achieving its aims and delivering value for money. What/where does the Welsh Government consider are the main challenges in assessing outcomes/value for money.

Health boards' financial performance and planning

13. An update on the overall financial performance of health boards, including:
 - projected end of year financial position for health boards for 2024-25, and which health boards are forecasting to breach their statutory financial duties to deliver break-even over the period 2022-23 to 2024-25 and to secure Ministerial approval for their integrated medium-term plans for the period 2024 to 2027;
 - which health boards have received additional end-of-year and in-year financial support in 2024-25; the extent of that support and the planned duration; together with confirmation of any funding being held in the Main Expenditure Group for Local Health Boards that has yet to be allocated or is being held to cover overspends

- a copy of the letter issued to Local Health Boards to be used in their preparation of their Integrated Medium Term plans for 2025 to 2028, if this is not published by the time the evidence is submitted to the Committee;

(In its report on the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25, the Committee recommended that the then Minister for Health and Social Services publish a copy of the letter she issued to Health Boards to be used in the preparation of their respective Integrated Medium-Term Plans. Where applicable, she should do this on an annual basis, alongside publication of other Welsh Government draft budget documentation. In her response, the then Minister for Health and Social Services agreed to do so moving forward.)

- details of the Local Health Board allocations for 2025-26, which are issued annually under a Welsh Health Circular, if the letters have been issued to Local Health Boards but not published at the time the evidence is submitted to the Committee;
- details of how the Welsh Government will support and work with health boards to bring NHS Wales back into financial balance.

(The accounts for 2023-24 show that none of the Local Health Boards met the first statutory financial duty under the NHS Finances Act 2014 (the 'Act') to break even over a rolling three year period: they all reported a cumulative overspend against the revenue resource allocation limit for 2021-22 to 2023-24. This is the first time all Local Health Boards have breached break-even over a three year period since the implementation of the Act. In total, Local Health Boards' overspent by £185 million in 2023-24, with a cumulative overspend of £385.3 million over the three years).

Social care

14. Planned allocation for social care, including:

- Any additional funding identified for 2025-26, and how such funding will be targeted.
- How the allocations will help to ensure the ongoing viability and stability of social care services, including residential and domiciliary care.
- What support the draft budget will provide for unpaid carers, including evidence of any new support schemes and specific spend on respite care and financial support for carers.
- Measures in the draft budget that will improve the sustainability of the social care workforce, particularly domiciliary care staff shortages.