

## **Senedd Cross Party Group on Human Rights**

**Meeting, online, 6<sup>th</sup> December 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 or spoken at the meeting.

- Sioned Willaims MS, Chair.
- Professor Simon Hoffman, Secretary.

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

### **Matters Arising**

From meeting in September 2024:

Simon Hoffman informed the meeting that plans to hold Congress on human rights in Wales in December 2025 are ongoing although at an early stage. The intention is to hold a series of events leading up to the Congress commencing with a launch event in January.

The chair suggested that any request to use facilities at the Senedd etc. should be made at the earliest possible opportunity.

The previous minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

### **Agenda item**

Those present discussed the only substantive item on the agenda: how to respond to the Welsh Government's reply to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's request for information on progress in relation to the Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales report (letter available here: [letter](#)).

There were several contributions, all speakers expressed concern about the tone and content of the letter, in particular:

- The implication that because there is no longer any threat of repeal of the Human Rights Act there is less urgency to incorporate human rights in Wales; and the suggestion implicit in the terminology of the letter the incorporation may not be a viable option for Wales. It was agreed that both of these implications are misplaced.
- Connected to the prior point, it was noted that the Welsh government seems oblivious to the need to protect the human rights of future generations, in particular having regard to the rise off far right discriminatory populism and the ongoing crisis in living standards.

- Concern was expressed but the letter did not include an express confirmation of the Welsh government's commitment to incorporation.
- It was noted that there is no clear statement about what resources will be allocated to support the work of the legislative options working group.

In general terms those present expressed their concern that the response to the Committee's request for information represents, at his highest, a bland attempt to explain a lack of progress, but may also be seen as suggestive of a definite cooling on incorporation of human rights in Wales.

In response the group agreed a number of **actions** to maintain the momentum on incorporation:

- The chair will send a letter to the Welsh government expressing dismay at the response to encapsulate the discussion at the Cross Party Group.
- The group take note of the Congress which will take place in 2025 and it was agreed that this would present a number of opportunities for the group to make a contribution toward the debate on the value of human rights in Wales.
- With the above in mind, the chair noted that the group could provide a forum for joining together case studies which demonstrate the positive impact of human rights on individuals and communities.
- The group agreed that in 2025 its work plan would include a mini inquiry into the state of human rights in Wales with a focus on where human rights are being violated in Wales, and how human rights have helped to promote better access to public services for individuals.

## AOB

The group was informed about the following:

- The new Older People's Commissioner for Wales has included human rights amongst her priorities for her future work.
- A report by Amnesty International on the situation in Gaza:
  - <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/genocide-report-uk-2024>
- A blog on the ongoing challenges for human rights in Wales in the lead up to human rights day:
  - [Human Rights Day 2024 - Swansea University](#)