

Health and Social Care Committee

HSC(4)-12-11 paper 3

To: Health and Social Care Committee

From: Committee Secretariat

Date: November 2011

PETITION ON PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION IN WALES – CONSIDERATION OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE’S APPROACH

Background

1. The Health and Social Care Committee agreed to conduct an oral evidence session on public toilet provision in Wales at its meeting on 12 October. This follows the referral of a petition on this subject from the Petition Committee ([P-03-292](#)) during July 2011.
2. The Committee agreed to schedule a session after the Christmas recess to consider the public health issues raised by the petition, specifically the public health implications of an alleged lack of public toilet facilities.
3. To inform its work, it is suggested that the Committee undertakes a short and focused written consultation exercise in advance of the oral evidence session to be scheduled for January 2012, details of which are outlined in this paper.

Purpose

4. The Committee is asked to consider and agree: the questions to be asked as part of the written consultation; a draft list of consultees; and a proposed timetable for the work.

Written evidence: key questions

5. It is proposed that the Committee seeks the views, in writing, of interested parties on the provision of public toilets in Wales. It is suggested that the written consultation:
 - focuses on the public health implications of an alleged lack of provision of public toilets;

- explains clearly that the Committee is unable to comment explicitly on the duty of local authorities to provide facilities as this does not fall directly within the Committee's remit .
6. A list of consultees for the focused written consultation exercise is attached at Annex A of this paper.
7. Suggested questions to ask as part of the consultation are:
- What are the effects of public toilet provision (or lack thereof) on the health and social wellbeing of a person?
 - Is there evidence of people being unable to leave their homes due to concerns over the availability of public toilets? If so, what are the health and wellbeing implications of this?
 - Is there equality across Wales – and in relation to all people – in the provision of public toilets?
 - How should public toilet facilities address the needs of different groups of people (men, women, disabled people, people with special health needs, children)?
 - Is there a particular need for improved facilities for specific groups?
 - What could the wider effects of inadequate public toilet provision be on public health and the community? e.g. correspondence sent to the Petitions Committee suggests that there is a risk of street fouling and a consequential spread of disease

Timetable

8. The following timetable is suggested:

25 November 2011	Issue written consultation
23 December 2011	Written consultation closes
January 2012	Oral evidence session

Oral evidence

9. Suggested witnesses for the oral evidence session are:
- Cllr Louise Hughes (lead petitioner), Age Cymru and the Welsh Senate for Older People (as supporters of the petition);

- Health practitioners and representatives of bladder and bowel charities; and
- Chris Brereton, Deputy Chief Environmental Health Adviser, and Dr Sara Hayes as Acting Deputy Chief Medical Officer (public health).

Action

10. Members are invited to discuss and agree the approach outlined in this paper, including:
 - the key questions to ask as part of the short and focused written consultation exercise in advance of the oral evidence session (paragraph 7)
 - the proposed timetable (paragraph 8)
 - proposed witnesses for the oral evidence session in January (paragraph 9)
 - proposed consultees for the short and focused written consultation exercise (Annex A)

ANNEX A

List of consultees for the focused written consultation exercise

- Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Age Cymru
- Welsh Senate for Older People
- Local Health Boards
- Public Health Wales
- Faculty of Public Health
- Disability Wales
- Mencap Cymru
- Scope Cymru
- British Toilet Association
- IBS Network
- Bladder and Bowel Foundation
- National Association for Colitis and Crohns Disease
- Association for Continence Advice
- All Wales Continence Forum
- British Society of Gastroenterology
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Children in Wales