

Julie James AM
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Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Julie

Report on Employment Opportunities for People Over 50

I am writing to thank you for attending the Enterprise and Business Committee to discuss with Committee Members the Welsh Government's response in detail to our "Employment Opportunities for People over 50" report. We found it a helpful and productive session.

It was particularly useful to hear that you intend to make progress towards the seven recommendations accepted *in principle*, albeit not necessarily in the way that the Committee envisaged. We look forward to hearing about the progress made and how this will add value to existing Welsh Government policies and initiatives.

The Committee was pleased to hear that you are making progress on some of our recommendations through your meeting with Sarah Rochira, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, during the summer and that you intend to meet her again soon.

The Committee welcomes your reassurances that the Welsh Government will actively consider what new research is needed to really understand and provide an accurate analysis of the economic activity and inactivity of people over 50 in Wales, in the context of the current Government programme of research. We feel strongly that there needs to be an up-to-date and accurate picture of the current situation so that policy initiatives can be based on sound evidence.

However, the Committee remains concerned that there are significant gaps in the data which is specific to the over 50s. The Welsh Government must take the lead



and must not rely on the office of the Older People's Commissioner and third sector organisations to fill these gaps.

The Committee is also disappointed that you will not consider a skills strategy for people over 50. The Committee believes the skills needs of this cohort of people are sufficiently different to the general working population to justify separate strategic planning, even if this is a subsection of the Welsh Government's [Policy Statement on Skills](#).

The Committee noted your concern and the sector's concerns about the impact in Wales of the proposed UK Apprenticeship Levy and any likely implications for the Welsh Government's Co-investment policy. The Committee has also recommended that the Welsh Government should call for the continued devolution of the DWP skills and employability programmes to Wales but notes your concerns about the mandatory element of the Programme. We will keep an eye on progress in this area.

The Committee would like to take up your offer to return to the Committee to update us on progress next year.

Kind Regards,



William Graham

Chair, Enterprise and Business Committee

