

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3, Senedd

Meeting date: 1 July 2024

Meeting time: 11.30

For further information contact:

Rhys Morgan

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration (11:00–11:30)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(11.30)

2 The EU Settlement Scheme and citizen's rights after Brexit: evidence session

(11:30–12:30)

(Pages 1 – 16)

Rhys Hughes Evans, Service Manager – Settled

Kate Smart, CEO – Settled

Kezia Tobin, Head of Policy and Advocacy – the3million

Supporting document:

Equality and Social Justice Committee [Annual Report: European Union Settlement Scheme \(April 2024\)](#) (PDF 1MB)

Lunch (12:30–13:30)



3 The EU Settlement Scheme and citizen's rights after Brexit: evidence session two

(13:30–14:15)

Mihnea Cuibus, Researcher in Migration at The Migration Observatory –
University of Oxford

Fiona Costello, Research Associate at the EU Migrant Worker Project –
University of Cambridge

4 Papers to note

(14:15)

4.1 Correspondence from the Minister for Mental Health & Early Years to the Chair regarding the Childcare follow up inquiry

(Pages 17 – 22)

4.2 Correspondence from the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee to the Minister for Mental Health and Early Years and to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care regarding Prisoner healthcare

(Pages 23 – 26)

4.3 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice responding to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's report on the Welsh Government's Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (Memorandum No. 2) on the Victims and Prisoners Act

(Pages 27 – 29)

4.4 Correspondence from the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee to the Chair regarding a follow up session on the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

(Pages 30 – 31)

4.5 Correspondence from the Chair to the Llywydd and Chair of Business Committee regarding Committee remits

(Pages 32 – 33)

- 5 Motion under Standing Order 17.22 to elect a Temporary Chair for items 1 to 5 of the Committee's meeting on 8 July 2024 and any other business relating to pre-appointment scrutiny under consideration at the Committee's meetings on 8 and 15 July 2024**
(14:15)
- 6 Motion under SO17.42 (vi) to exclude the public from the remainder of today's meeting**
(14:15)
- 7 The EU Settlement Scheme and citizen's rights after Brexit: consideration of evidence**
(14:15–14:30)

Document is Restricted

Jayne Bryant AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar
Minister for Mental Health & Early Years

Our ref: MA JB 5056 24

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

18 June 2024

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend and provide oral evidence at the Equality and Social Justice Committee on 13th May.

During my attendance at Committee several follow up notes were requested. I am pleased to provide a response to those notes below.

What level 2, 3 and 5 etc. requirements mean in the childcare context? How does this correspond to how qualified people are?

The [National Minimum Standards \(NMS\)](#) outline the requirement for childcare and playwork staff to hold qualifications appropriate to their post as set out below. The NMS also sets out the proportion of staff who should hold particular qualifications.

Child Minder

Child minders must have successfully completed an appropriate preregistration course recognised in the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework before undertaking child minding.

Any assistant employed by a child minder must have successfully completed an appropriate course recognised in the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Day Care Settings

Person in Charge (manager)

Prior to their appointment, a person in charge must have:

- At least 2 years' experience of working in a day care setting.

AND

- At least a level 3 qualification recognised on the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework or The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersede them) which is appropriate to the post.

*Within a **day care setting** for children between the ages of 0 to 12 years, the person in charge should hold both:*

- At least a level 3 childcare qualification recognised on the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework

AND

- At least a level 3 playwork qualification or a smaller award as recognised on The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersedes this).

*Within **Play Provision** for children from 5 years old up to the age of 12 years, the person in charge should hold at least:*

- a level 3 playwork qualification recognised on The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersedes this).

*Within a **holiday play scheme**, the person in charge should hold at least:*

- a level 3 playwork qualification, as set out in The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersedes this).
- a level 3 qualification in a related sector AND the Managing a Holiday Play Scheme Award, as set out in The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersedes this).

Other Staff

For sessional care (Childcare for children from aged 2 to 4 years, which is for less than a continuous period of 4 hours in any one day on non-domestic premises. It may include playgroups, cylchoedd meithrin, wrap around care, funded education places and free childcare places.)

- at least 40% of all 'other staff' hold a qualification at least at level 2 from the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework or The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersede them) which is appropriate to the post. AND at least half of these have a qualification at level 3.
- at least another 10% of all 'other staff' must be "working towards" a level 2 or 3 qualification.
- unqualified or volunteer staff members cannot exceed 50% of total staff.

For Open Access Play (normally for children from 5 to 12 years, provided by staff and operating for over 2 hours a day and more than 5 days in a year. Can be permanent or temporary provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises and can include holiday play schemes. The purpose is to provide staffed play opportunities for children, usually in the absence of their parents).

- at least 40% of all 'other staff' hold a level 2 playwork qualification as recognised on The Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersedes this) which is appropriate to the post AND at least half of these have a qualification at level 3.
- at least another 10% of all 'other staff' must be "working towards" a level 2 or 3 qualification.
- unqualified or volunteer staff members cannot exceed 50% of total staff.

For Full Day Care

- At least 60% of all 'other staff' hold a qualification at least at level 2 on the Social Care Wales's Qualification Framework AND at least half of these have a qualification at level 3. (For full day care settings for children between the ages of 0 to 12 years, staff may also be required to hold a qualification as recognised on the Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales List of Required Qualifications for Playwork (or any lists which supersede them) which is appropriate to the post).
- at least another 20% of all 'other staff' must be "working towards" a level 2 or 3 qualification.
- unqualified or volunteer staff members cannot exceed 20% of total staff.

In addition to the childcare qualification requirements, the NMS sets out the requirements for mandatory first aid and safeguarding training.

Accepted qualifications

In order to work as a qualified member of staff in a childcare setting in Wales, your qualification must be recognised on the early years and childcare aspect of Social Care Wales's [qualification framework](#). The framework sets out current qualifications as well as legacy qualifications which are accepted.

Accepted qualifications need to meet the design principles, a set of criteria which Welsh qualifications must have to be included on the framework. These are:

- based on the National Occupational Standards that are appropriate to the needs of the sector
- based on assessing competence in the workplace
- subject to external verification
- based on reliable and robust demonstration of employer and service needs
- able to be aligned to qualifications frameworks across the UK
- based on a structure that allows progression routes, as well as opportunities to study breadth and/or depth of knowledge and skill
- able to respond flexibly to the needs of the sector and its learners, including delivery models, language, and accessibility
- able to recognise different types of learning, knowledge, skills, and competence.

Following a review of childcare qualifications, a suite of new qualifications from level 2 to 5 were developed and introduced from 2019. The Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (CCPLD) qualifications are now the main recognised qualifications for working in childcare (although previously accepted qualifications, known as legacy qualifications are still accepted).

Flying Start Qualification Requirements

The Flying Start childcare guidance explains that staff appointed to work in Flying Start childcare settings must be of the highest calibre in order to deliver high quality provision. Staff should be responsive, affectionate and readily available. They should be committed to their work with children and to the ethos of high quality, which is a cornerstone of the

Flying Start programme. To enhance and support children’s development, staff should be appropriately trained ([Qualification Framework - Social Care Wales](#)) and staff development should ensure continuity, stability and also improve quality ([Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) - Social Care Wales](#)).

Staff working in Flying Start settings must have experience of working with young children and must have the qualifications outlined within Social Care Wales’s Qualification Framework to work within the Early Years and Childcare Sector in Wales. The list identifies the qualifications required to work within Flying Start. It sets out the current qualifications required (and equivalents), past qualifications which are accepted and suggested work-based qualifications for career progression and CPD.

Where staff do not have the required qualification, the Flying Start plan must show how and by when staff will be trained to the required standard. This will need to be monitored by the Childcare Advisory Team to ensure that progress is on schedule and qualifications are completed within the agreed time.

Flying Start childminders:

Childminders feature as part of the suite of providers offering quality Flying Start childcare services across a number of local authorities in Wales. Childminders can play a vital role in ensuring that Flying Start childcare meets the needs of parents or carers and uphold the professional and quality standards which are a feature of Flying Start childcare provision. Welsh Government guidance directs local authorities to ensure that Childcare Advisory Teams should work with and support childminders so that 2–3-year-olds in their care receive high quality childcare services. The Welsh Government has provided flexibility in the level of qualifications required for individual childminders to engage with Flying Start provision in order to reduce barriers to provision. For qualification requirements, a childminder who doesn’t work with an assistant(s) is defined as a Flying Start Practitioner and a childminder who does work with a childminder assistant(s) in the setting is defined as a [Flying Start Leader](#).

Foundation Learning Qualification requirements

The qualification requirements for settings funded to deliver education are set out, based on the type of setting the provision is delivered within, in the National Minimum Standards and, based on the role, within SCW’s qualifications framework.

Qualification Levels in the childcare sector

Table 1 below illustrates that of those childcare workers currently employed in registered services Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) data reports that almost half (47 percent) hold a Level 3 childcare qualification with 15 percent of the workforce holding a Level 5 childcare qualification. Around 17 percent hold no relevant qualifications.

Table 1: Number and percentage of childcare practitioners who hold selected qualifications

	Number	Percentage
Total number of childcare practitioners	14,091	100%
Childcare Practitioners with Childrens Care Learning and Development qualification at level 2	1,316	9%

Childcare Practitioners with Childrens Care Learning and Development qualification at level 3	6,606	47%
Childcare Practitioners with Preparing For Leadership Qualification At Level 4	177	1%
Childcare Practitioners with Childrens Care Learning and Development qualification at level 5	174	1%
Childcare Practitioners with Childcare Qualifications At Level 5	2,159	15%
Childcare Practitioners with Qualification relevant to childcare but not listed	1,283	9%
Childcare Practitioners with No formal Childcare Practitioner qualifications	2,376	17%

Source, Care Inspectorate Wales Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS)

A copy of the evaluation produced with Care Inspectorate Wales

During February 2023, we asked for volunteers from the childcare and play sector to take part in a pilot of our new improvement meetings. The pilot was launched in April 2023 and ran until the end of June 2023.

We were delighted that 90 providers offered their time to take part in the pilot and we carried out a total of 60 improvement meetings.

After each meeting, we sent a survey to each provider and inspector to seek their views on the whole process. We used this information to inform our evaluation and we published a summary of our findings. [Childcare & Play - Improvement meeting pilot findings](#). The proposal going forward is to call these quality meetings rather than improvement meetings.

The number of local authorities that use childcare as an intervention for children in need

Family Information Services (FIS) are based within each local authority and can offer information, guidance and advice to families on many issues. They are experienced in guiding parents to services which can help their family circumstances, and this includes offering up to date information on local, registered childcare settings.

Our Families First programme is there to help families in need of extra help. Families First gives local authorities the flexibility to provide tailored support for children and families. The primary focus of childcare within the Families First guidance is about providing childcare as a means to encourage one of both parents to attend services where childcare might otherwise have prevented parents from engaging.

While we hold information on the number of children receiving social care and support, we do not have specific information on which local authorities actively use childcare as an intervention.

Flying Start services can be delivered through the Outreach element of the programme to high need children and families living outside of recognised Flying Start areas. It is for Local Authorities to determine the best way of offering this support within the budget agreed by the Welsh Government.

I hope that you find the above useful and I look forward to receiving an update from the Committee once the follow-up inquiry into this important area of work concludes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'J'.

Jayne Bryant AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar
Minister for Mental Health & Early Years

Eluned Morgan MS
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Jayne Byrant MS
Minister for Mental Health and Early Years

19 June 2024

Dear Eluned and Jayne

Prisoner healthcare

You will be aware that, towards the end of the last Senedd, our predecessor committee undertook an **inquiry into health and social care on the adult prison estate in Wales**. The inquiry focused on the provision of health and social care services and its impact on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of prisoners.

That committee's **report** made a number of recommendations to the Welsh Government which highlighted the importance of structured governance, collaborative efforts across government and health bodies, and the establishment of clear standards and pathways to address the health and social care needs within the prison system. It emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to prison health and social care, encompassing staff education, strategic planning, resource allocation, and the integration of technology to meet the healthcare needs of prisoners effectively.

In 2022, we exchanged **correspondence** with you and your then deputy Ministers about progress in implementing the recommendations in the above report. At that time, some of the progress had been impacted by the pandemic.

More recently, we have been **contacted by Dr Robert Jones** from the Wales Governance Centre about funding for prison healthcare. His letter highlights that the underfund for prisoner

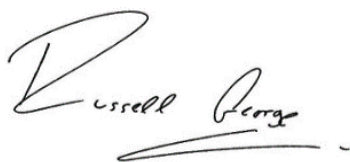
healthcare has deepened since the Committee concluded its inquiry in 2021. He states that, in the last 12 months, the cost of prisoner healthcare services in Wales increased by 29 per cent to £7,163,188, whilst the funding provided through the Block transfer remained the same as when it was set two decades ago; £2.544m.

In addition to the above, we are, of course, aware of the series of recent drug-related deaths at HMP/YOI Parc in Bridgend, which have given rise to concerns about prison safety.

These are matters that merit further consideration at this time and, to this end, I have set out a number of areas in the attached annex where I would be grateful for an update on progress. For convenience, I have included a reference to the relevant recommendation from our predecessor's report, where relevant. I would appreciate a response by **8 July 2024**.

A copy of this letter goes to Mike Hedges MS, Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee and Jenny Rathbone MS, Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, given their respective Committees' interest in this subject area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

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



Annex

Could you provide an update in each of the following areas:

1. the inspection arrangements for HMP/YOI Parc and whether they fully align with those in place for public sector prisons in Wales (Recommendation 3);
2. since the healthcare at HMP/YOI Parc has been under the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (December 2022), the improvements that have been observed in the healthcare services provided;
3. how the MoU between the Health Board, HMPPS, and Welsh Government ensures that healthcare delivery is consistent and meets the required standards;
4. the representations that have been made to the UK Government to enable the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to question professional and clinical judgment in complaints about health services in privately-run prisons like HMP Parc (Recommendation 5);
5. the consideration that has been given to adopting the approach used in England for making pre-prison medical records available to prison health services (Recommendation 8);
6. how progress on mental health priorities will be monitored, including how the contribution of national standards will be assessed (Recommendation 10);
7. the anticipated timescales for developing a standardised clinical pathway for managing substance misuse in prisons (Recommendation 12);
8. the revised priorities and workplan for the Deep Dive Group, including monitoring access to support for prisoners with co-occurring issues (Recommendation 13);
9. discussions with HMPPS about establishing an Expert Advisory Group for Medicines (Recommendation 14);
10. regarding the agreed service specification for healthcare services at HMP/YOI Parc, the measures that are in place to ensure the quality and effectiveness of dementia screening and support (Recommendation 16).
11. the steps that have been taken towards finding a fair, sufficient and sustainable baseline for funding via the Welsh Block' for prison healthcare provision (Recommendation 21);
12. the progress that has been made in collating and reviewing the costs of healthcare provision across prisons in Wales, and when we can expect this information to be published (Recommendation 22);

13. the steps taken to monitor demand, provision and spend on social care in prisons to ensure funding issues do not prevent access to necessary care (Recommendation 23);
14. the steps taken towards identifying, developing, and publishing Wales-specific datasets on current and forecast prison population (Recommendation 25).

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

Jenny Rathbone, MS
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru

seneddequality@senedd.wales

25 June 2024

Dear Jenny

I wish to provide Members of the Equality and Social Justice Committee with an update on the Victims and Prisoners Act following the announcement of the UK General Election and in relation to the Committee's report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) which I published on 15 April 2024.

On Friday 24 May 2024, both Houses agreed the text of the Bill and it received Royal Assent and is now an Act of Parliament.

The UK Government acknowledged during the Third Reading of the Bill, the Senedd had withheld its consent to Clause 18 (Clause 15 on introduction of the Bil) and Part 2 of the Act. In the consent debate on 17 May, the Senedd also withheld consent for clauses 1 to 4, 11, 26 and 27 of the Bill related to the Victims Code. However, the UK Government disagreed with the competence assessment for the clauses and, therefore, did not make reference to them during the Third Reading. I am extremely disappointed with the UK Government's decision to progress the Act without the consent of the Senedd.

The UK Government did, during the Third Reading make one amendment which respects the Senedd consent process. Clause 18 (15 on introduction), which provides that the Secretary of State (SoS) must issue guidance about victim support roles (such as independent domestic violence advisors and independent sexual violence advisors); and that any bodies having functions relating to victims, or to the criminal justice system, must have regard to it, will not apply in Wales. I welcome this amendment, which was taken on the advice of my officials. I want to be clear we will continue to engage and support collaboration across Governments in this area, however, not at the expense of our existing frameworks and true, meaningful engagement with the Welsh specialist sector.

Additional clause (Clause 22) was added to the Act which allows victim's impact statement in the mental health tribunals to be considered in relation to discharge conditions. We do not

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

consider this to be within the competence of the Senedd as, overarchingly, it is a criminal justice matter relating to the management of offenders. A commencement order will be required to bring the clause into force. Welsh Government officials are working with UK Government to ensure the Welsh landscape is properly represented prior to commencement of the provisions.

Additionally, implementation of the revised Victims Code will need to be considered by an incoming UK Government. My officials will continue to work with UK Government officials to ensure the devolution settlement is properly respected and Welsh devolved public services are recognised for their differences.

Until the very end of March 2024, and following extensive and constructive engagement at official level, we understood it would be likely the UK Government would offer, in view of the Senedd's competence in this area, a consent provision for the Welsh Ministers regarding the declaration of a major incident and the appointment of an Advocate for victims of major incidents arising in Wales. This position was suddenly reversed to one in which the UK Government undertook to only provide consult provisions which we had been clear did not respect the Senedd's competence and would be unacceptable. They gave no credible rationale for this position and we were surprised and disappointed that what we had worked to achieve was not possible.

During the consent debate, the Senedd gave its consent to clause 16, 17 and Part 3 of the Act which concern infected blood compensation. We will continue to work with the UK Government to progress the implementation of these parts of the Act.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their valuable scrutiny during this process.

I note your recommendations and conclusions and have responded to them below.

Conclusion 1. We agree that all the clauses identified by the Welsh Government in the Supplementary LCM (No.2) require the consent of the Senedd.

Conclusion 2. It is extremely disappointing that the Welsh Government has offered no reason or explanation for the delay in tabling this SLCM, which has resulted in less than 2 weeks for us to undertake scrutiny.

I welcome the Committee's views on these clauses. The rationale for our position on which amendments engage the LCM process is set out in the LCM laid on the 19 May 2023 and the SLCMs laid on 15 April 2024 and 30 April 2024.

The previous Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip wrote to the Llywydd, 22 December 2023, explaining it had not been possible to lay a supplementary legislative consent memorandum (SLCM). I set out in my opening remarks during the consent debate on 7 May 2024, the reasons for the delay in laying the SLCM. My officials have worked hard to lay Legislative Consent Memoranda at pace across the Bill process, but this has been regrettably difficult because of the turbulent passage of the Bill and the uncertainty around the UK Government position. I accept that this has meant the Senedd has not had adequate time to scrutinise a Bill with far-reaching implications for Wales. We recognise the impact the uncertain UK Government position has had on the Senedd's ability to scrutinise the Bill, and this underlines the need for improved UK practice in this area to support the Sewell convention and the constitutional role of the Senedd. We have moved as fast as we could at each stage in the Bill process, in the face of issues outside our control.

Recommendation 1. The Welsh Government should explain in its response to this report why so little progress has been made as a result of discussions with the Ministry of Justice and set out the date and duration of meetings between both parties at ministerial and officials level since July 2023.

In December 2023, the UK Government wrote to us with constructive offers on some clauses, which we expected to see reflected in amendments scheduled for January 2024. It was our intent to lay a SLCM confirming what we had hoped would be a positive and final position on the Bill. However, the amendments were rescinded and instead we had to wait until April 2024 for confirmation of their approach. We have had to reconsider our position which delayed the production of our SLCMs. Therefore, it was not possible to lay a SLCM at Lords' Committee Stage.

Engagement with the Ministry of Justice at official level has been constructive, with regular meetings taking place during the passage of the Bill. Engagement took place through a mix of formal and informal meetings and contact, including ad hoc communications. Despite this repeated engagement, we were only informed of the UK Government's position on key proposals on 8 April 2024.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Senedd grants consent to new clause 20 (Domestic Homicide Reviews); new clause 37 (Prohibited Steps Review) and new clause 40 (Compensation for Infected Blood Victims). However the Committee would like clarification from the Cabinet Secretary, that payments made in regard to the new clause 40 will be from central government funds.

I welcome this recommendation from the Committee. I can confirm compensation payments for the victims of the infected blood scandal will come from central UK Government funds.

Recommendation 3. On the basis of the information before us we recommend that the Senedd withholds consent to clauses 1 to 4, 11, 22 and 23 (relating to the Victims Code), 15 (relating to guidance about IDVAs); and 24 to 27 and 29 to 31 (relating to victims of major incidents).

I welcome this recommendation from the Committee on the above clauses.

I am copying this letter to all Members of the Senedd and Mike Hedges MS, Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitutional Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

—
**Local Government
and Housing Committee**

Jenny Rathbone MS,
Chair
Equality and Social Justice Committee

25 June 2024

Dear Jenny,

You will be aware that the Committee undertook an inquiry and published a report on the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in August 2022. We are committed to following up on the progress made by the Welsh Government on these important issues, and have therefore agreed to undertake a one-day follow up inquiry to our report. The purpose of the follow-up work will be to consider progress since the publication of the report, in particular whether our recommendations have been implemented

Given your Committee's interest in these areas, we would like to invite your Members to join us for the evidence sessions on 3 October. I would expect the meeting to be scheduled for 09.00 – 13.00 as we're planning to arrange three stakeholder panels and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice has confirmed her attendance for 12.00 – 13.00. Members will be able to attend in person or through Zoom. I would be grateful if the Committee Clerks could liaise regarding Members' attendance.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths MS

Chair

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

**Equality and Social Justice
Committee**

Rt Hon Elin Jones MS
Llywydd and Chair of Business Committee

Dear Llywydd,

24 June 2024

Re: Committee remits

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on the above issue, in light of recent changes in ministerial responsibilities. From our perspective our remit has served us well to date and we do not consider any changes to the equality and social justice remit to be necessary at this time.

From day one, we have sought to work together both formally and informally with other committees on cross-cutting issues including with the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee on well-being of future generations; the Children, Young People and Education Committee on child poverty, and childcare; and the Local Government and Housing Committee on Gypsy, Roma traveller sites, and support for refugees. We continue to champion equality and social justice considerations in our scrutiny and urge other Senedd Committees to ensure that these are mainstreamed in their work.

On the wider issue of committee remits, we do not disagree with the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee's arguments and accept that scrutiny of five separate ministers is likely to be onerous and would pose significant challenges. In that regard we respect the Business Committee's decision to look at whether adjustments may be required. In reaching a decision, however, we urge you to prioritise changes that will strengthen the premise of collective responsibility and accountability. We have regularly been frustrated by the tendency of some ministers to avoid scrutiny or explain policy failures by arguing that responsibility for something is in another minister's portfolio. On certain issues we have gone as far as to recommend the creation of unified portfolios (for example a Minister for Babies, Children and Young People as part of work on child poverty) or formal mechanisms for coordinating cross-cutting policy areas (for example in our report on the Draft Budget 2024-25) to combat this.¹ The Welsh Government has told us that these steps are

¹ Equality and Social Justice Committee, [Calling time on child poverty: how Wales can do better](#), November 2023; [Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25](#), February 2024

unnecessary every time, and yet, we suspect that this mentality continues to be pervasive. Ultimately, it is Cabinet that is responsible for government decision-making in our system and it is vital that any decisions on remits strikes a balance between practical considerations and the need to enhance the capacity of Committees to scrutinise and hold ministers to account.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J' and 'R'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.