

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 – Tŷ Hywel

Hybrid

Meeting date: 8 December 2025

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

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### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(Pages 1 – 30)

### 2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1537 We require a public poll on 20 mph speed limits as the Welsh people are being ignored

(Pages 31 – 39)

2.2 P-06-1541 Produce a Clean Water Bill for Wales and for Welsh Rivers

(Pages 40 – 51)

2.3 P-06-1549 Urgent Support for Hirwaun, Wales, Homeowners Affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

(Pages 52 – 58)

2.4 P-06-1550 Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy

(Pages 59 – 115)

2.5 P-06-1552 Stop building industrial solar ‘farms’ close to residential buildings and within village boundaries

(Pages 116 – 123)

2.6 P-06-1553 Increase investment and action in nature-based flood management to protect Welsh communities

(Pages 124 – 134)



- 2.7 P-06-1565 Continue funding Technocamps to provide the support that schools and teachers across Wales rely on  
(Pages 135 – 143)

### **3 Updates to previous petitions**

- 3.1 P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales  
(Pages 144 – 147)
- 3.2 P-06-1428 Stop the flooding in Caenant Terrace, Skewen NOW!  
(Pages 148 – 151)
- 3.3 P-06-1525 Preserve the unique character of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal for the future generations of Wales  
(Pages 152 – 156)

### **4 Papers to note**

- 4.1 P-06-1291 Hold an enquiry into the corporate takeover of the veterinary profession in Wales  
(Pages 157 – 159)
- 4.2 P-06-1489 Legislate to ensure swift bricks are installed in all new buildings in Wales  
(Page 160)
- 4.3 P-05-784 Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal – recognition and support  
(Pages 161 – 167)

### **5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of today's business:**

- 6 Discussion on the draft report – P-06-1510 Direct NRW to revoke the environmental permit and ensure the closure of Enover's, Hafod Landfill Site in Wrexham**  
(Pages 168 – 207)



Document is Restricted

# P-06-1537 We require a public poll on 20 mph speed limits as the Welsh people are being ignored

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

**Reference:** SR25/12648-1

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1537

**Petition title:** We require a public poll on 20 mph speed limits as the Welsh people are being ignored

**Text of petition:** The speed limit petition has been ignored by those in power, the only way to properly gauge feeling from the people would be to have a public poll of all Welsh voters, and, when it is realised how hated the 20 mph limits are, then they should be changed back to 30mph immediately.

The promise of the Senedd listening was yet another lie from politicians too self-absorbed to listen to the voters. We have now seen many other speed limits also reduced, which also need returning to the previous limits. Since the petition against the 20mph speed limit closed, there has been a lot of talk but very little visible action on this matter, and more speed limits have been reduced. All limits need to be restored, including the M4 back to 70mph, as the pollution excuse is now redundant as a large part of Port Talbot steelworks has been shut down.



In my opinion, the safety reason for these limits is being proved wrong every day as there now appear to be more accidents than ever. This law has targeted the wrong people, the people speeding excessively are still speeding, but now I believe the accidents are more severe as when the speeders hit those who wish to keep their licenses, the speed difference is now far greater.

It is also causing more road rage incidents than I've seen in 35 years of driving, and has reduced the significance of the areas that had, and actually needed, 20mph limits.

It has been and continues to be a waste of time and money, forced on us by zealots that have no idea how this country needs to be run.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

# 1. Background

In 2019, the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. In July 2020, the Welsh Government accepted the group's recommendations, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following public consultation and a pilot scheme across eight communities, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order in June 2022. The draft Order was approved by the Senedd in July 2022 and came into force in September 2023.

The policy has received widespread media coverage and the petition calling for the legislation to be 'rescinded' received over 469,000 signatures – the highest ever received for a Senedd petition.

Senedd Research has previously published a number of articles on:

- the policy and reaction to it in the lead up to the national roll-out;
- the implementation of the policy and the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits;
- how the policy will be enforced and monitored; and
- developments since the policy came into force (such as the guidance review and early monitoring data).

## Impact of the 20mph speed limit

### Pilot areas

As outlined pilots took place in eight communities across Wales to trial 20mph default limits in the lead up to the national roll-out in September 2023.

The first monitoring report on the impact in pilot areas was published in March 2023, followed by a final monitoring report (for the pilot areas) in February 2024.

Data up to May 2023 showed:

- “large positive” changes in relation to speed reduction Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and attitudes to active travel;
- “slight positive” change in vehicle / pedestrian yield behaviour; and

- “no discernible change” in local air quality and “slight negative” changes in vehicle journey times, including a general decrease in punctuality for peak time bus services.

## **Collisions and casualties**

The police recorded road collisions: 2024 data showed that in 2024 there were 1,441 road collisions on 20 and 30mph road speed limits (combined), the lowest figure since records began. This was a decrease of 19% from 2023, the largest annual fall apart from 2020 (during the COVID-19 pandemic).

During the 12-month period from 2023 Q4 to 2024 Q3 (after the introduction of the 20mph default speed limit), the number of casualties on 20 and 30mph roads (combined) is 28% lower than the same period a year before.

Within these casualties, fatalities decreased by 17.3% and seriously injured casualties decreased by 2.3%.

It is important to note that the Welsh Government’s Chief Statistician has said that more time (typically three years) and data is needed to make meaningful comparisons to statistics around collisions before the speed limit was introduced.

## **Monitoring public opinion**

### **National listening programme**

The Welsh Government introduced a ‘national listening programme’ in April 2024. This was a Wales-wide programme of interviewing citizens to understand their perspectives on road safety in residential areas. Within this programme, the public are asked to identify and report roads to the local highway authority where they believe the speed limit should change.

### **Transport for Wales monitoring programme**

In September 2023 Transport for Wales (TfW) published a monitoring framework document for the national roll-out. This identifies the policy objectives and the indicators to be used. Data will be collected for up to five years post implementation. This includes “qualitative attitudinal surveys”. The framework says:

*We will examine the attitudes and perceptions of people living in areas where the speed limit has been reduced using attitudinal surveys after the national roll-out. The surveys will include questions on attitudes towards using active travel modes (walking, wheeling and cycling) for local journeys in built-up areas and will also consider respondents’ perceptions on*

*matters relating to traffic speed, traffic noise and effects on communities. There will be a particular focus on more vulnerable groups in society when collecting attitudinal data*

In the July 2025 report on the framework, TfW said:

*Research on public attitudes to the 20mph limit will be conducted through a separate policy evaluation commissioned by the Welsh Government, so data for the associated KPIs is not available for this report.*

At the time of preparing this briefing, the last research released on KPIs associated with public attitudes was released in November 2022 by the Welsh Government.

## **M4 speed limit**

Exposure to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) has negative health impacts. The Welsh Government has a legal duty to comply with air quality regulations, including limits on NO<sub>2</sub> at the roadside. Legal limits are set at:

- an hourly limit value of an average of 200 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) (which must not be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year); and
- an annual limit value of an average of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Assessment and monitoring previously identified NO<sub>2</sub> levels above the legal limit at several locations on the motorway and trunk road network, including the M4 between Junctions 41 and 42 at Port Talbot (Swansea and South Wales Zone).

Since the introduction of the 50mph speed limit in 2018, NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have reduced (last measurement in the 2024 report was taken in 2023).

## **2. Welsh Government action**

In a letter to the chair responding to the petition, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS, refers to 2024 collision statistics being “at their lowest level for that quarter [July to September] since records began, including during the pandemic”.

The Cabinet Secretary affirms that in 2024 the public were given the chance to suggest where they feel changes to speed limits should be made.

The Cabinet Secretary also referred to local authorities being able to change speed limits where it is safe to do so, and that local authorities and the Welsh Government are reviewing feedback from residents on trunk roads to ensure they have the right speed limits.

In terms of the M4 at Port Talbot and at Newport, the Cabinet Secretary discussed the Welsh Government's legal obligation to meeting statutory air quality limits to protect public health.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2020, the Senedd debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits with 45 of 53 Members voting in favour of the motion.

As mentioned above, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order in June 2022. The draft Order was approved by the Senedd in July 2022.

In June and November 2024, the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee scrutinised the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS, on the policy.

The Petitions Committee has previously considered a number of petitions relating to the policy including:

- A petition calling on the Welsh Government to stop the introduction of the 20mph limit (considered in April 2022). At that time the Committee agreed to close the petition due to the ability of local authorities to change the limit on roads where 20mph would not be appropriate.
- A petition calling on the Welsh Government to hold a public poll on the speed limit reduction (considered in October 2022). This petition was also closed.
- A petition calling for a survey of residents living in the pilot areas (considered in March 2024). Again, this petition was closed in light of monitoring work taking place through TfW.

In May 2024, a Plenary debate was held on the largest ever Senedd petition calling for the policy to be scrapped. The policy has been mentioned in multiple questions and speeches during Plenary from January to October 2025.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1537  
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01645/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

22 October 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 6 October on behalf of Martyn Evans regarding Petition P-06-1537 'We require a public poll on 20 mph speed limits as the Welsh people are being ignored'.

The primary goal of the 20mph default policy is to save lives and reduce casualties on our roads. The latest police recorded collision stats, covering the period between July and September 2024, show collisions on Welsh roads at their lowest level for that quarter since records began, including during the pandemic [Safest summer on Welsh roads, new statistics show | GOV.WALES](#).

Between April and August 2024, I met and listened to citizens, bus drivers, emergency services, the police, young people, vulnerable people, businesses, county, town and community councillors, local authorities and many others – to understand their views on road safety in residential areas. In July 2024, we gave highway authorities revised guidance to make it clearer where roads can be 30mph. In 2024, the public has had a chance to suggest where they feel changes should be made.

We have listened to people on the policy and we have empowered local authorities to make changes where it is safe to do so. Local Authorities and Welsh Government as highway authority for trunk roads are currently reviewing feedback from residents and assessing it against our revised guidance to make sure they have the right speeds on the right roads, with road safety being at the heart of any decision made.

If highway authorities decide to adjust speed limits on specific roads, they will commence the process of making statutory Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), providing another opportunity for public engagement. This will ensure that decisions remain transparent and that communities continue to be involved in these local choices at every stage. However, as a separate highway authority, Welsh Government is unable to intervene in the decisions being made by local authorities.

Further information, including an updated FAQ page, can be found at:  
[Introducing 20mph speed limits: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#)  
[20mph speed limits | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

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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.

We have been taking action to tackle elevated concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) alongside the M4 at Port Talbot and at Newport. The Welsh Government has a legal obligation to meet statutory air quality limits to protect public health. Research has shown that reducing speed to 50mph at specific locations is the quickest and most effective way to lower NO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which are primarily caused by vehicle traffic.

A 50mph speed limit has been extended between Junction 24 and Junction 28 at Newport to help tackle congestion. This was recommended by the South East Wales Transport Commission (SEWTC) as the optimum speed in terms of journey time reliability and journey speeds, also considering other important factors such as air quality and noise.

You can find further information about our work to support compliance with statutory NO<sub>2</sub> limits [here](#) and the fast-track recommendations of the SEWTC [here](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

# Produce a Clean Water Bill for Wales and for Welsh Rivers

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

**Reference:** RS25/12648

## Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1541

Petition title: Produce a Clean Water Bill for Wales and for Welsh Rivers

Text of petition:

Our rivers are crying out for help. We do not have long before it will be too late to save them.

For too long, legislators, regulators and polluters have talked about protecting our rivers but nothing meaningful is ever done.

We are calling on Members of the Senedd to commit to producing a Clean Water Bill for Wales.

The Clean Water Bill will:

- Set an ambitious framework of legally binding targets for biodiversity and water quality
- Ensure there is regulator that is fit for purpose that holds all polluters equally to account



- Issue new Permits that are meaningful and which broaden the range of pollutants which mandate action [and] have significant consequences for breaking permit limits
- Carry out a review of the way water companies operate in Wales
- Ensure enforcement of the provisions of the Water (Special Measures) Act 2025
- Ensure all rivers designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are tested in line with Bathing Water Quality Regulations
- Work with Farmers to encourage food production without creating nutrient runoff

The Water Bill must ensure action over words and prioritise nature over profit-at-all-costs. Citizen Scientists, local communities and river users should be included in the committee formulating the bill.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

# 1. Background

Senedd Research has a number of publications that give background information to the issues raised in this petition, these include:

- [The Water Industry in Wales](#) - includes relevant legislation, the devolution settlement, water companies in Wales, Welsh Government policy and the roles and responsibilities of key organisations including regulators.
- [A guide to water quality in Wales](#) - outlines how water quality standards are implemented, monitored and upheld, and who's responsible. It also discusses some of the main challenges to water quality in Wales, and what the Welsh Government has been doing to tackle them.
- [Storm overflows explained](#) - how they're managed, how well they're understood, and how they're impacting water quality.
- [Bathing water quality in Wales](#) - how bathing water quality is measured and classified.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has hosted a number of 'water summits' [since 2022](#), aiming to drive collaborative action to tackle water quality in Wales. The most recent took place in [September 2025](#) and focused on tackling agricultural pollution.

The Welsh Government also established the [Wales Better River Quality Taskforce](#) in 2022 to evaluate the approach to managing and regulating [storm overflows](#). The Taskforce published [five action plans](#) for areas identified as requiring additional action. These were last updated in 2023.

In his letter to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary highlights existing "specialist and targeted programmes ... designed to tackle pollution in our rivers to ensure they achieve good ecological status". As such he disagrees with the petitioners view "that all rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) should be tested in accordance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations".

### 2.1. Review of water sector regulation

In October 2024, the UK and Welsh governments launched a joint "[Independent Commission into the water sector and its regulation](#)", which aimed to "form the largest review of the industry since privatisation".

In July 2025, the [final report of the Independent Water Commission](#) (IWC) was published. It made 88 recommendations and concluded that a “fundamental reset” of the water sector was needed. Recommendations include:

- new national strategies to be brought forward;
- integration of system planning across the water sector;
- changes to the legislative framework to drive solutions to reduce pollutants and rainwater entering the system;
- regulator reforms - Ofwat be abolished, and a separate, independent economic regulator for Wales’s water sector be established; and
- regulation reforms - a “[fundamental reset](#)” in the way regulators engage with companies.

In the [Welsh Government’s response to the report](#) in July, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, said:

*This is a once in a generation opportunity to reset arrangements created before devolution and is about more than institutional change.*

In a subsequent [statement to Plenary on 21 October](#) the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that “the complexity of water sector reform is significant”, and the “need for primary legislation in the UK Parliament, followed by primary legislation in Wales”.

In his letter to the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary says the Welsh Government is currently working on its response to the IWC report.

## **2.2. Legislating to protect biodiversity**

The Cabinet Secretary’s letter says the Welsh Government is “fully committed to continuing to develop[ing] and strengthen[ing] environmental law in Wales”. He highlights work to bring forward the [Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill](#), which makes three key proposals, to:

- embed [environmental principles](#) into law to underpin future policy decision-making;
- establish a permanent [environmental governance body](#) which would hold public authorities to account on environmental law; and

- introduce a statutory framework for legally binding biodiversity targets.

The Cabinet Secretary explains that:

*... Welsh Ministers will be required to set targets on at least one issue within each priority area. The priority areas include reducing pollution, and a target in this area could focus on freshwater health by seeking to reduce excess nutrients, hazardous chemicals, and plastic pollution.*

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee has undertaken various pieces of work around water quality, including:

- an inquiry into water quality and sewerage discharges (2022);
- an inquiry into the performance of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (2024);
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) annual scrutiny sessions; and
- consideration of legislative consent for the UK Water (Special Measures) Bill.

The Petitions Committee has considered the following petitions within this subject area:

- P-06-1281 Urgently stop raw sewage discharges into Barry's Old Harbour and Watchtower Bays (completed);
- P-06-1398: To act to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi (completed);
- P-06-1312 To help improve water quality in the River Usk by upgrading sewage systems in the Usk valley (completed).

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1541  
Our ref HIDCC/01687/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

24 October 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 6 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee, referring to the 'Save the River Usk' petition which calls for the development of a Clean Water Bill for Wales.

I can confirm that both I, and the Welsh Government are fully committed to continuing to develop and strengthen environmental law in Wales, and we are doing our utmost to respond to this issue. It must be recognised that there is no easy solution, and it will take time before we see positive outcomes from our actions.

However, Welsh Government is currently working on our response to the Independent Water Commission (IWC), which was published in July this year. You will be aware that the Commission's report presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform the arrangements established prior to devolution in relation to water. The report focused on various matters such as how water companies operate, and the establishment of an independent economic regulator specifically for Wales. Another key element of the report in terms of improving water quality was the need to review the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. I will be consulting widely on these recommendations to ensure that we have a regulatory framework that addresses the public needs, gives investors' confidence and improves our environment.

The UK Government has indicated that it will publish a White Paper this autumn, and the Welsh Government intends to consult outlining how we plan to respond to the recommendations set out in the report. This will be of significant interest to you as a committee when considering this petition.

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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.

Furthermore, we are already working on the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) Bill. This Bill reflects the ongoing need for sustainable and long-term action to deliver the change required to respond to the climate and nature emergencies. The Bill will provide a key step in ensuring that environmental quality and standards do not decline following our departure from the European Union.

The Bill introduces a statutory framework for setting biodiversity targets, giving Welsh Ministers the power to set targets that drive action to halt and reverse biodiversity decline, primarily through increasing native species numbers and improving ecosystem resilience.

As a result of this Bill, Welsh Ministers will be required to set targets on at least one issue within each priority area. The priority areas include reducing pollution, and a target in this area could focus on freshwater health by seeking to reduce excess nutrients, hazardous chemicals, and plastic pollution. The hope is that the Bill will create an ambitious legal framework for biodiversity and water quality targets.

Regulators have an important role to play in terms of water quality, and the work of Natural Resources Wales, particularly in relation to licensing, is a perfect example of this. They will consider how licences will change in the future, especially regarding the range of pollutants that will drive action.

Your letter referred to enforcing the provisions of the Water (Special Measures) Act 2025, and I agree that new legislation places a duty on us to act to achieve real change.

However, I disagree with the view that all rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) should be tested in accordance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations. Specialist and targeted programmes have already been designed to tackle pollution in our rivers to ensure they achieve good ecological status.

In terms of working with farmers to encourage food production without creating nutrient runoff, the evidence is clear—although there is variation from catchment to catchment, it must be recognised that a significant proportion of phosphorus pollution in many of our SAC rivers results from rural land use. This is the main contributor of phosphorus in six of our nine SAC rivers, including four of the five SAC rivers that fail to meet phosphorus targets.

I have held a series of Water Summits which provide an opportunity for the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, water companies, the agricultural sector and other stakeholders to work collaboratively to explore and develop approaches to tackle water pollution in Wales. A summit focusing specifically on agriculture was held on 25 September this year to identify practical steps that could be taken to improve water quality, with the agricultural sector leading the way. The next Water Summit, to be held in early 2026, will also focus on agriculture, considering how we can further collaborate with farmers to improve the water quality of our rivers.

A key part of responding to phosphorus pollution is implementing the recommendations arising from the review of the CoAP. I want to build on the collaborative approach we adopted in developing the SFS by establishing a technical task and finish group. This group will consider the findings of the review, including the closed periods.

Looking ahead, it is essential that all relevant stakeholders can contribute to shaping the future of the water environment in Wales. I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the Committee's work, but the wider context must be considered when acting on this petition. We are already responding to the recommendations of the Water Commission, and the Green Paper to be published in the coming weeks will provide further details regarding any legislative changes required.

Thank you very much for writing to me on this particularly important matter, and I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Irranca-Davies', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Thank you for your email and the attached letter with an invitation to comment and provide additional material for the committee's attention.

We have included below some background information to explain why the petition to demand a Clean Water Bill for Wales was created, more detail around how this petition fits into our broader call to the Senedd to take action and specific comments in response to the letter.

Save the River Usk (STRU) has created a legislative proposal for **Bil Dŵr Glân, the Clean Water Bill** to pull together in one place legislation that deals specifically with discharges into waterways and the simple overriding principle that no discharge can harm a water body.

This petition was set up to allow members of the public to show their support for the proposed Water Bill and it is intended to act in conjunction with it. On Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, STRU will have a media launch for the bill in the Senedd, sponsored by Jane Dodds, MS. We invite members of the Petition Committee to attend the launch at 12pm on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> in one of the media briefing rooms at the Senedd for more information.

Kind regards

Save the River Usk

#### Background Information

Save The River Usk (STRU) was set up in 2020 to raise awareness of the decline in the health of the River Usk and the wildlife that depends upon it. Since then, over 55 volunteers have collected over 5000 samples along the river, the data being analysed by a team of volunteer analysts.

STRU is one of many citizen science groups that have formed across Wales to collect this data to assist Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the regulator, in identifying pollution and causes of water quality issues. Approx. five years ago, the sampling protocols and testing equipment used by STRU and the other groups was agreed in conjunction with Cardiff University based upon the advice of NRW as to the criteria that they would find most useful.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in the position where our rivers and waterways are still in crisis. Many of our rivers, lakes and estuaries are designated and protected as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) for their unique habitats and species, which are of international importance. However, nearly every SAC river in Wales is still failing water quality standards and their conservation objectives. Many are not fit to swim in.

The level of pollution entering our waterways is unacceptable; from wastewater, sewage, agriculture and land management, industry, road runoff and household chemicals.

As a result, the life in our rivers is dramatically declining. Iconic salmon populations have crashed; life-smothering algal blooms threaten aquatic insects; once common, drifts of blooming water crowfoot are becoming a rare sight.

It is clear that current policies, permits and enforcement are simply not providing the urgent improvements needed to halt this decline:

- There are a plethora of agencies, policies, partnerships and projects aimed at monitoring and protecting our waters. Budget is allocated, reports and projects are created but the output and impact are minimal.
- Permits for discharges into our waterways are outdated and insufficiently rigorous. They often reflect a bare minimum standard for a single pollutant and don't reflect the most up to date scientific understanding. Permit holders work only to comply with the discharge permit. Discharge permits are also not required for most agricultural land use or for road run-off, both of which are significant contributors to the diffuse pollution entering our waterways.
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is Wales' principal environmental regulator. It monitors water quality and biodiversity and acts when pollution incidents occur. However, it appears that NRW has been unable to keep up with the scale of the tasks required by its role. Legal action against polluters often seems limited and there appears to be no real deterrent to creating pollution.
- Whilst there have been some improvements, waste water treatment plants, combined storm overflows and septic tanks continue to pollute our waterways with very little consequence.

We cannot keep repeating what we are doing and hope that it will somehow, suddenly start to make significant improvements to our water. STRU has created a legislative proposal for Bil Dŵr Glân, the Clean Water Bill to pull together into one place legislation that deals specifically with discharges into waterways and the overriding principle that no discharge can harm a water body.

Change and improvement will only happen if we have a simple legislative umbrella that prioritises the wildlife and health of our waterways, an effective and passionate regulator which enforces comprehensive discharge permits that are a real deterrent to polluters, and systems that have direct community involvement built in.

This petition was set up to allow members of the public to show their support for the proposed Water Bill and it is intended to act in conjunction with it. On Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, STRU will have a media launch calling for the bill in the Senedd, sponsored by Jane Dodds, MS.

#### Thoughts on Letter

• It is disappointing that there is no sense of urgency in the letter to the need to respond to the crisis in our natural world. This lack of urgency where committee after committee are formed and engage and finally produce recommendations that don't turn into real action is what we have been doing for years and it isn't working.

- We welcome the consultation on the findings of the Independent Water Commission (the Cunliffe Review) and the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) 2017. This reflects our call for a full review of the effectiveness of the water companies in Wales. This review should take into account that the findings of the review fell short for Wales in a number of ways. Firstly, the Commission's terms of reference meant that it could not consider whether the privatised model of water companies is appropriate. As a result, it focused primarily on tighter regulation. This is not enough. Decades of evidence show that water companies prioritise returns for shareholders or bondholders and this drains money out of the system. Whilst Wales's largest water company - Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water - does not have shareholders, its funding model

does rely on bonds issued with highly favourable rates of return. Secondly, the Cunliffe Review failed to address the issue of democratic control. The Commission's proposal for Regional Water Authorities risks merely adding to the plethora of multi-agency bodies without adding the necessary insights or imperatives from the local communities most affected by pollution. Wales should look to greater involvement of democratically accountable local authorities, environmental groups and citizen scientists holding real power over how water companies invest, operate, and deliver.

- Mr Iranca-Davies makes reference to the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) Bill. This Bill seems insufficiently detailed and does not commit to improving waterways, only a vague statement that “a target in this area **could** focus on freshwater health by seeking to reduce excess nutrients...” and “The **hope** is that the Bill will create an ambitious legal framework for biodiversity and water quality targets” (our emphasis). Whilst it seems that our proposal and petition are seeking the same thing, our proposal is clear and unambiguous and focuses only on water health, allowing legislation to pass without getting confused and included in other matters.
- NRW are only mentioned in relation to them considering how licences will change in the future. This is vague and does not consider how effective they are and whether there is a better way to organise them to make them an effective regulator run with passion and commitment to nature. As included in the Future Generations Report 2025 this should include the same regulatory powers as their counterparts in England: for example, the power to be able to use civil sanctions, such as orders to stop polluting activities or to impose fines.
- We disagree with Mr Iranca-Davies' comment on our call to test all rivers assigned as SAC's in line with Bathing Water Quality Directives. He states that “Specialist and targeting programmes have already been designed to tackle pollution in our rivers to ensure they achieve good ecological status.” These programmes exist but are failing to improve our rivers, NRW reports that only 40% of water bodies in SAC rivers are at good or better overall status.
- We welcome Mr Iranca-Davies' focus on the agricultural sector and collaboration with farmers.
- We look forward to the Green Paper to be published shortly but would urge that relevant stakeholders include genuinely engaged representatives of Welsh communities, river users and citizen scientists.

#### In summary

The crisis in our rivers is acute, and progress is slow and patchy. The driving force of Bil Dŵr Glân is the recognition of the urgency of this crisis. Its intention is to have a bill that deals specifically with discharges into waterways and the simple overriding principle that no discharge can harm a water body and to use the growing public disquiet to bring about immediate action, not more committees and talking shops.

## Urgent Support for Hirwaun, Wales, Homeowners Affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 08 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 08 December 2025

Reference: RS2512525-3

**Petition Number:** P-06-1549

**Petition title:** Urgent Support for Hirwaun, Wales, Homeowners Affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

**Text of petition:** In February 2024, RAAC was discovered in 77 homes on Hirwaun's Gower Estate, 14 of which are privately owned through the Right to Buy scheme. Residents now face average costs of £23,000 for a temporary fix, while contending with invalid insurance policies and unfair mortgage terms. RAAC is unstable and deteriorates rapidly, posing serious safety risks—yet neither Trivallis nor Rhondda Cynon Taf Council have offered realistic support. We urge the Welsh Government to intervene, providing financial assistance and long-term solutions for affected homeowners.

Hirwaun residents come from deprived communities. Many have become mortgage prisoners—trapped with lenders unwilling to refinance, while alternative providers refuse applications. “These homeowners are financially exposed, paying for home insurance that excludes RAAC-related issues, all while living under the threat of roof collapse. These properties were cheaply built by the local council, sold to Trivallis, and then passed to unsuspecting residents through the flawed Right to Buy scheme—without any disclosure of the structural risks posed by RAAC.

The Welsh Government must establish a national remediation fund—using devolved powers or by pressing the UK Government for support—and initiate



a public inquiry into historic failings. Warnings were ignored: over 400 RAAC-related demolitions took place in Basildon in the 1990s, and 86 homes were condemned in West Lothian in 2004.

The Welsh Government must act now—by redefining building regulations and housing standards to mandate 50-year guarantees on defective materials, and by creating a Welsh high-risk property register to prevent future scandals.

## 1. Background

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is a form of concrete with a bubbly structure. It was used between the mid-1950s and mid-1990s for roof planks, wall panels, and floor planks. In the summer of 2023, multiple sudden failures of RAAC planks which had been graded as ‘non-critical’ led to increased safety concerns about buildings with RAAC.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In September 2023, the Welsh Government said it had written to stock-holding local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) requesting an assessment of their stock to identify the presence of RAAC in homes in Wales. Community Housing Cymru (the membership body for housing associations in Wales) said in March 2024 that “the information we have received from our members does not suggest there is a widespread issue across Wales”.

However, RAAC was identified in a small number of properties in Wales. In March 2024, Trivallis said it had identified RAAC in 77 homes on the Gower estate in Hirwaun, of which 60 are owned by Trivallis and 17 are in private ownership. Trivallis has stated that the homes on the Gower estate in Hirwaun are the only buildings of this type that they own.

Trivallis has developed a remediation programme for social homes they are responsible for, which is due to take place between October 2024 and April 2027. Trivallis has reportedly also offered affected owner-occupiers and private landlords access to their contractors to carry out building safety works on other properties.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In May 2024, the then Minister for Climate Change was questioned in the Senedd on support for private homeowners in Hirwaun. She said:

...we are calling for a four-nations approach across the UK now to what is an increasingly obvious problem that much predates devolution and will require some substantial funding to put right.

In June 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government was asked to provide an update on support for homeowners in Hirwaun. She stated that the Welsh Government was not able to directly offer interest-free loans to cover the costs of works required for homeowners in Wales, but noted that financial support may available through the local authority.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) has stated that it can offer grants of up to £6500 to private owners on the Hirwaun estate. However, during a meeting of the council on 25 June 2025, it was suggested that only 2 homeowners on the Hirwaun estate meet the eligibility criteria to receive the grant.

The minutes show that Councillors agreed to liaise with the Welsh Government about providing additional funding to address issues with RAAC.

RCTCBC also offers interest-free loans, to help contribute towards the cost of remediation and home improvement works. It has also stated that it is offering other support to residents, including a dedicated Support Worker as a point of contact to offer advice and assistance as required, and support through Public Health officers.

### 4. Response in other areas of the UK

The UK Government has assessed that the prevalence of RAAC is low in housing, and has stated that responsibility for funding and managing RAAC remediation lies with individual property owners.

In Scotland, RAAC has been identified in around 2445 social homes. The Scottish Parliament's research service has noted that nearly 700 privately owned homes have RAAC elements, and that there may be more which have not yet been identified.

The Scottish Government has said that it is up to local authorities to decide what support is appropriate for affected homeowners. It has convened a RAAC in Housing Leadership Group which held its inaugural meeting in September 2025. According to the minutes for the Group, the Scottish Government has re-stated it will not create a specific RAAC remediation fund, but will consider funding flexibilities within existing budgets.

The Scottish Government has reportedly agreed a £10 million funding deal with Aberdeen City Council by providing additional funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, to enable the Council to meet the costs of remediation through its own budget. The funding would reportedly enable the voluntary acquisition of private homes at pre-RAAC market value. Over 500 homes in Aberdeen are affected by RAAC.

The Scottish Government has said it is continuing to press the UK Government to create a UK-wide RAAC remediation fund.

## 5. Response to the petition

In her response to the Committee on 14 November, the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government said she understood some affected homeowners may need support to carry out repairs or access funding.

She noted that Trivallis has offered access to their contractors, and suggests this could help homeowners to reduce costs. She said:

Additionally, there are potential funding options, grants and loans that may be available through Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, subject to eligibility criteria.

The Cabinet Secretary said there are no current plans to amend building regulations to require a guarantee for material. She said that the Welsh Government is working with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and devolved governments to keep under review the safety and standards of all buildings.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.





Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1549  
Ein cyf/Our ref JB/00953/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee

14 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 06 October offering me the opportunity to share my views on the issues raised by Petition P-06-1549 - Urgent Support for Hirwaun, Wales, Homeowners Affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

My officials and I have been in correspondence with Mr Wilson Chowdhry, and I am grateful to him for highlighting the issues faced by private homeowners in Hirwaun. I am committed to working with the UK Government and other devolved governments on this issue, however to date the UK Government has not provided funding for RAAC remediation across the UK. Building maintenance is ultimately the responsibility of property owners. However, I recognise that some owner-occupiers may need support to carry out necessary repairs or access funding.

I am pleased that Trivallis Housing Association has begun its RAAC remediation programme at the Gower Estate in Hirwaun. I understand that the installation of the safety deck system is intended to provide a permanent and structurally sound solution rather than a temporary fix. Trivallis has also offered affected owner-occupiers and private landlords access to their contractors, helping reduce costs by removing overheads. Additionally, there are potential funding options, grants and loans that may be available through Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, subject to eligibility criteria.

With regards to building regulations and housing standards, building regulation 7 sets out a requirement that building work shall be carried out with 'adequate and proper materials' which are:

- Appropriate for the circumstances in which they are used.
- Adequately mixed or prepared.
- Applied, used or fixed so as adequately to perform the functions for which they are designed.
- Applied, used or fixed in a workmanlike manner.

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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.

There are no current plans to amend building regulations to require a guarantee for materials. However, we continue to monitor the situation in Wales and are working with others across the industry, including the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) in England and the devolved governments to keep under review the safety and standards of all buildings.

I will continue to monitor this situation closely. My priority is to ensure homeowners are supported to access the help available to them.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government

# P-06-1550 Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

**Reference:** SR25/12212

## Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1550

**Petition title:** Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy

**Text of petition:** The RCOG's Greentop Guidelines for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy recommend Xonvea as an effective first line treatment for the management of severe pregnancy sickness. However it is currently off formulary in Wales. Hyperemesis Gravidarum is a serious condition affecting around 3% of pregnant women, 1 in 10 women with HG will terminate their pregnancy and 1 in 4 will consider suicide. Xonvea is a safe and effective treatment. We ask for AWMMSG to review their recommendation.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.



# 1. Background

## **Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy**

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy (NVP) is a common condition, affecting approximately 80% of pregnant women. Symptoms typically improve or resolve by weeks 16 to 20, though for some women it can last longer. Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) is a severe form of NVP, occurring in 0.3% to 3.6% of pregnant women, which in some cases can last until the baby is born.

HG is characterised by persistent and intense nausea and/or vomiting that significantly interferes with normal eating and drinking. This can lead to complications such as dehydration, weight loss and low blood pressure. In some cases, it can require hospital treatment.

A 2021 study published in Obstetric Medicine found that approximately 5% of women with HG ended a wanted pregnancy due to the severity of their symptoms. Additionally, around 52% reported considering termination. The study also revealed significant mental health impacts: 25.5% of respondents occasionally experienced suicidal thoughts, while 6.6% reported frequent suicidal ideation.

## **Xonvea**

Xonvea (a combination of doxylamine and pyridoxine) is a licensed medicine for the treatment of NVP in women who do not respond to conservative management. It is the only medication licensed in the UK for this indication.

In June 2019, NICE published an evidence summary on Xonvea. This has since been updated and incorporated into NICE guideline NG201: Antenatal care, where it is listed among a number of pharmacological options for managing NVP.

NICE states in its guidelines that the evidence for Xonvea providing symptom relief compared to placebo is of “low or very low quality.” However, unlike alternatives with stronger efficacy data—such as Metoclopramide and Ondansetron—it is not associated with an increased risk of birth defects.

A survey conducted by Pregnancy Sickness Support in April 2025 found that 83% of women who had experienced NVP and been offered Xonvea had found it effective. Among these, 87% considered it more effective than other medications they had tried.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists currently includes Xonvea among the recommended first-line antiemetic options for managing NVP, alongside other antihistamines and phenothiazines used off-label.

### **Access to Xonvea in Wales**

Health boards in Wales are required to make medicines recommended by NICE available to patients within 60 days. However, Xonvea has not undergone a full technology appraisal by NICE and so is not subject to this requirement. In cases where a medicine has not been appraised by NICE, the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) assesses whether to make a medicine routinely available in NHS Wales.

In 2019, AWMSG published advice not to recommend the routine use of Xonvea in NHS Wales, citing insufficient evidence of cost-effectiveness and clinical benefit compared with existing treatments. The decision was based on uncertainties in the economic model, such as hospitalisation rates, and the absence of robust comparative data with alternative therapies. This recommendation was subsequently ratified by the Welsh Government.

The Scottish Medicines Consortium reached a similar conclusion to AWMSG in 2019, advising that Xonvea should not be made routinely available in NHS Scotland. In England, Xonvea is available in some areas, but access is inconsistent. The UK Government has acknowledged this variation and stated it will review prescribing practices and set clearer expectations for clinicians to ensure more equitable access.

In August 2025, it was reported that AWMSG had been engaging with Xonvea's manufacturer and that it was actively exploring options to improve patient access to the treatment in Wales.

## **2. Welsh Government action**

The Welsh Government response to this petition states that the AWMSG appraisal undertaken in 2019 remains the most comprehensive evaluation of Xonvea to date. It notes that AWMSG only conducts reappraisals when new evidence or price changes could affect cost-effectiveness, but in this case there has been little or no new evidence since 2019. The response also notes that AWMSG invited the manufacturer to provide an updated submission but no additional information was supplied, though engagement is ongoing.

The response goes on to state that while AWMMSG does not recommend Xonvea for routine use, health boards can include it in local formularies under certain circumstances, and clinicians may prescribe it when other treatments for NVP are unsuccessful. According to the response, between January and July 2025, more than 1,140 Xonvea prescriptions were issued in the community.

### **3. Welsh Parliament action**

The Senedd has not considered patient access to Xonvea or the broader management of NVP to date.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1550  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/02595/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

05 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 6 October about petition **P-06-1550 - Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy.**

Ensuring the best care possible is available for the people of Wales is a Welsh Government priority and we must ensure our health service treats all conditions and diseases fairly. Taking an evidence-based approach helps us to do this, whatever the disease, by ensuring resources are targeted at where the evidence indicates people will gain most benefit and the cost of a medicine is in balance with those benefits.

To do this, we rely on appraisals undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and our own body, the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG). Where a medicine is recommended by NICE in a technology appraisal guideline or highly specialised technology (HST) assessment, or in an appraisal undertaken by AWMSG, health boards and NHS trusts in Wales must make it routinely available, in line with its clinical eligibility.

AWMSG appraised Xonvea® in May 2019. It considered its use for the treatment of nausea and vomiting of pregnancy in women who do not respond to conservative management. Unfortunately, the cost-effectiveness data presented by the company were insufficient for AWMSG to recommend its routine use. The details of AWMSG's recommendation can be accessed in the appraisal report available at <https://awttc.nhs.wales/accessing-medicines/medicine-recommendations/doxylamine-succinate-pyridoxine-hydrochloride-xonvea/>.

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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.

The Scottish Medicines Consortium has also undertaken an appraisal of Xonvea® and reached a similar conclusion to AWMSG. While NICE has recently updated its general advice about the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, it has not published a technology appraisal guideline or undertaken a cost effectiveness analysis. This means decisions to make Xonvea® available and any restrictions on its use in England, are made by individual NHS organisations.

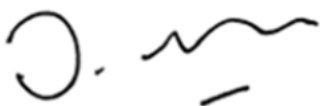
The AWMSG appraisal undertaken in 2019 therefore remains the most up-to-date and comprehensive evaluation of the cost effectiveness of the medicine on which a decision regarding routine availability can be made.

There are occasions where it is appropriate for AWMSG to reappraise a medicine. However, these are limited to situations in which there is new evidence or a change in the acquisition price of a medicine, which would lead to a different conclusion about its cost effectiveness determined by an appraisal. In this case there appears to be little or no new evidence which would lead to an AWMSG appraisal arriving at a different conclusion to the appraisal undertaken in 2019.

AWMSG met recently with the manufacturer to enquire about the willingness to make an updated submission for an appraisal. I understand the manufacturer was unable to provide additional or new information at this time. AWMSG will continue to engage with the company.

While AWMSG does not recommend Xonvea® be made routinely available, health boards are able to include it in their local formularies in some circumstances. Healthcare professionals in primary and secondary care can and do prescribe Xonvea® when other treatments for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy are ineffective – there were more than 1,140 prescriptions issued in the community between January and July 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Miles', with a stylized flourish.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Good evening,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to reply to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care's response to Petition P-06-1550 - Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. Please see the following attached:

- 1) My main response entitled 'Senedd Petition Response'
- 2) A compilation of stories emailed to me in the last week from women who wanted their experience of hyperemesis gravidarum shared. I would be grateful if you could take the time to read through some of these as they show you the damaging impact of the condition on the sufferer and potentially fatal impact on the baby
- 3) Correspondence I've had with doctors who have contacted me about doxylamine with pyridoxine 'Xonvea' and their experience of hyperemesis gravidarum care
- 4) A paper written by the charity Pregnancy Sickness Support examining the efficacy of Xonvea and a brief overview of a cost benefit analysis.

I volunteer for the charity Pregnancy Sickness Support as a 'HG Advocate'. The charity have informed me that they would be happy to communicate with you directly to discuss this in greater detail. I am happy to put you in contact with them.

I sincerely hope that you give this petition the due consideration it deserves and do not reject it simply on the basis of a decision about cost that you have already made.

Regardless of your decision on Xonvea I hope you take the time to recognise that the care of pregnant women suffering with pregnancy sickness in Wales is in need of serious reform.

I look forward to hearing your response,

Yours sincerely,

Sarah

Sarah Spooner (Butterworth) BSc (hons) PGDip MCOptom Prof Cert Glauc Prof Cert Med Ret

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr Jeremy Mile's response to Petition P-06-1550 - Place the drug Xonvea on to the formulary for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. Having read through his response there are a number of points I wish to raise.

As a brief introduction, pregnancy sickness affects around 70% of all pregnancies. Around 4% of women will suffer with a condition known as hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) (although the exact figure is likely higher than this as women struggle to get a diagnosis) which causes severe nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. HG is defined as severe nausea and/or vomiting with symptoms starting before 16 weeks of pregnancy, it is an inability to eat or drink normally and strongly limits daily activities<sup>1</sup>. HG is associated with several risks for both mother and baby. The physical impacts for the mother include dehydration requiring rehydration, ketoacidosis, increased risk of thrombus and increased risk of Wernicke's encephalopathy.<sup>2</sup> The mental health risks include a significantly higher incidence of psychosis, postnatal depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, OCD and eating disorders.<sup>3</sup> There is an increased risk to the baby of pre-term birth and low birth weight and developmental delay in HG babies and 4.9% of HG sufferers terminate their wanted pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

Xonvea is the only medication licensed for use for the management of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy in the UK. It has an effective safety profile and does not have teratogenic effects. It is recommended for use by both the RCOG<sup>4</sup> and NICE<sup>5</sup>.

In Mr Mile's response he mentioned that the AWMSG appraisal of Xonvea in 2019 remains the most up-to-date evaluation of the drug. In a response to an article by Sky News in July 2025<sup>6</sup> the Senedd wrote that Xonvea is not available as it has not been approved by NICE. However, this information is incorrect as it was approved by NICE in April 2025. In the response from Mr Miles on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025 he has acknowledged that NICE has approved its use but has shifted the goalpost by requesting it undertake a cost effectiveness analysis.

I understand the Senedd's concerns that Xonvea is more expensive than other first line antiemetics. In response to this I would like to suggest that this is a myopic approach to healthcare and that it fails to consider the significant cost attached to poorly treated hyperemesis gravidarum. A 2019 study found that nausea and vomiting in pregnancy costs the NHS up to £64 million a year. The same study, based on 2016 prices, found that it cost £45 for a GP appointment, £238 for an ambulance call out and £850 for a 2-night impatient admission with rehydration and antiemetics.<sup>7</sup> The cost of a box of Xonvea to the NHS is £28.50. This pales into insignificance when you consider the cost of an emergency C-section, a NICU stay or the number of perinatal mental health appointments a HG sufferer may require due to inadequate treatment of the condition.

I have attached in a separate document a survey by the charity Pregnancy Sickness Support from April 2025 which establishes the cost and impact of Xonvea for the management of Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy. From this survey of 749 women, 492 have been offered Xonvea. Of those 83% of women reported finding it effective. On average 53% of women were offered a second line antiemetic and 43% were offered a steroid before trying Xonvea. Second line antiemetics and steroids both come with increased side effects to the pregnant woman and ondansetron, one second line

antiemetic, has a small increased risk of cleft palate in the developing foetus. 83% of women in the study found it more effective than other medication they tried. The average cost of 3 antiemetic medications at one week's supply, along with 3 GP appointments is £180.80 per sufferer. The average cost of a three-week supply of Xonvea, with 1 GP appointment is £138.65. While Xonvea may appear more expensive than some other medications used to treat nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, this comparison ignores the broader picture. When factoring in real-world outcomes and the overall patient journey, the value of Xonvea becomes much clearer.<sup>8</sup>

Cyclizine, Promethazine and Prochlorperazine (5mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £175.14	Cyclizine, Promethazine and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £184.18	Promethazine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £184.80	Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (buccal) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £187.67	Cyclizine, Metoclopramide and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £179.82
Cyclizine, Promethazine and Metoclopramide  3 GP appointments  Total = £174.46	Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £179.76	Promethazine, Prochlorperazine (buccal) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £191.97	Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (buccal) and Ondansetron (8mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £183.14	Promethazine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Ondansetron (8mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £180.27
Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Metoclopramide  3 GP appointments  Total = £170.78	Promethazine and Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Metoclopramide  3 GP appointments  Total = £174.40	Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Ondansetron (8mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = 175.97	Cyclizine, Promethazine and Ondansetron (8mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £184.18	Promethazine, Prochlorperazine (buccal) and Ondansetron (8mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £187.44
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Fig 1. Taken from Establishing the Cost and Impact of Xonvea for NVP. A Summary of Findings by Pregnancy Sickness Support. Fareham: Pregnancy Sickness Support.<sup>8</sup>

I also want to draw your attention to some key policies underpinning healthcare in Wales. The first of these is your keystone policy 'A Healthier Wales' which discusses the need to transition away from a heavy reliance on hospital-based care and treatment to a focus on health, wellbeing and prevention alongside community-based care.<sup>9</sup> I know from personal experience and speaking to many other women that sufferers often have to contact their hospital for a prescription of Xonvea. By allowing women to access this medication from their GP and local pharmacy there would be a reduction on the burden of hospitals. By making Xonvea more readily available for women you would likely reduce inpatient appointments for rehydration treatment and other HG complications

allowing for a better focus on prevention and wellbeing. In your policy ‘Maternity Care in Wales: A Five-Year Vision of the Future (2019-2024)’ your aim is for pregnancy and childbirth to be a safe and positive experience, and for parents to be supported to give their child the best start in life. By denying women access to treatment that is available to women in England you are failing to deliver on this aim.<sup>10</sup> I also have concerns that the difficulty in accessing Xonvea creates a socioeconomic disparity. I was fortunate enough for my husband to drive me to various locations in the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to collect medication and it was still immensely difficult, on occasion having to travel to an abortion clinic in Bargoed to receive medication. For many women who may not have access to a vehicle accessing rural locations in the Valleys for a week or two’s worth of medication is simply not feasible.

Finally, Once for Wales is a fundamental policy underpinning Welsh Health and Social Care. Mr Miles mentions that individual health boards can approve Xonvea on their own formularies and I am immensely grateful that this has happened in two Welsh health boards. However, the Once for Wales strategy aims to ensure equitable care across Wales without a postcode lottery. Unfortunately, this is not currently the case and many women do face a postcode lottery for adequate care.

If you would be amenable, I can put you in contact with the charity Pregnancy Sickness Support who can discuss in greater detail with you the implications of inequity in HG care pathways in the UK. I would also be happy to share with you my lived experience of the condition.

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## **Communication with Doctors**

### **Copy of email sent by Dr Georgina Forbes to the Senedd:**

Dear Minister,

I am writing to ask you to consider supporting the cause of allowing Xonvea to be prescribed to the women of Wales for the management of hyperemesis (severe nausea and vomiting in pregnancy).

The drug is recommended as the first line treatment by the RCOG in the greentop guideline and is the only licensed medication for hyperemesis in the UK.

The cost is just £28 for a 10 day supply. Far less than the cost of admission for rehydration or the cost of missed days of work/education.

I have unfortunately had to facilitate the termination of pregnancy for two women in ABUHB in the last week alone. Both pregnancies were very much planned and wanted. Both women had multiple admissions and were on multiple other medical treatments which were not giving adequate relief. For the sake of their physical and mental health they felt their only option was to terminate their much wanted pregnancies. Inevitably having a further impact on their wellbeing. These cases are very distressing for the patient and staff involved as Xonvea may well be the medication that provides symptomatic relief but departments are not allowed to prescribe it.

I urge you to consider addressing this on a national level so that women in Wales are not left behind compared to other UK nations and that ultimately there is no inequality between healthboards.

Dr Georgina Forbes  
Specialist Doctor in Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare  
Wales Committee Chair, College of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare

### **Information sent to me by Dr Stephanie Hemmings**

I don't know if my experience of women with HG in hospital will help, but you can have it just in case:

As a medical specialist I have been called to see women with HG on obstetric wards in hospital because obstetricians and gynaecologists (trainees mainly) are very inexperienced with managing HG and the complications it can cause (abnormal electrolytes, seizures due to not being able to tolerate medications) are seen as a medical problem. This is partly due to the main number of admissions from it come in

the early weeks when a pregnant patient is seen as a medical patient prior to 16 weeks. The patient I saw was having problems with her electrolytes and blood sugar, mainly due to her nausea and vomiting being inappropriately managed by medication. As medical specialists, we are in the wrong specialty to prescribe Xonvea off formulary (as it is seen as an obs and gynae specialist medication) and are restricted with other medications as we do not want to risk the growing baby.

If Xonvea was on the formulary it would open up the treatment options available for these patients and potentially prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. Additionally maternal medicine needs to be expanded as a specialty in Wales as it is a growing specialty in many places in England.

#### **Information sent to me by Dr Heather Kosick**

Hey Sarah my name is Heather Kosick and I'm a gastroenterologist from Canada. I just read the article about you in the BBC. I was honestly horrified that this happened to you! Here in Canada Xonvea, also called Diclectin, is readily available to all pregnant women. In fact, it is considered the first line agent for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy due to its extensive safety data. The approach here for patients is really to do anything possible for the mother to get her comfortable, even if there may be some risk to the fetus, as the risk of malnutrition and electrolyte abnormalities from HG far outweighs this.



## **Establishing the Cost and Impact of Xonvea for NVP. A Summary of Findings by Pregnancy Sickness Support**

This survey was conducted in April 2025 and advertised via our social media platforms and email list.

### **1. Survey Design and Participation**

This survey was conducted by Pregnancy Sickness Support in April 2025. It was open to anyone who had experienced NVP since 2018, when Xonvea became available in the UK. We received 749 responses within 10 days. Participants were asked about access to Xonvea, medication history, perceived effectiveness, and experiences of healthcare support. The survey was designed to understand real-world usage, outcomes, and barriers.

This was a self-selected survey, meaning participants chose to take part rather than being randomly selected. Aside from postcode and country data, no demographic information such as age, ethnicity, or sexuality was collected.

### **2. The History of Xonvea in the UK**

The medication Xonvea (Doxylamine/Pyridoxine) was first licensed for use in the UK in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

Xonvea is a medication that has been specifically designed for treating nausea and vomiting in pregnancy (NVP) and is the only licensed option for those being treated within the UK. Xonvea has been prescribed globally for decades and used to treat an estimated 30,000,000+ women worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> MHRA July 2018 (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency)

Despite being formally added to the RCOG Greentop Guideline<sup>2</sup> for treating NVP as a first line treatment option in February 2024, it remains a postcode lottery drug (i.e. inconsistent availability based on local formulary decisions).

The **Pregnancy Sickness Support - Xonvea Feedback** survey was conducted via Pregnancy Sickness Support in April 2025 to gather feedback from service users who have suffered with NVP since Xonvea was introduced to the UK in 2018.

### 3. Survey questions and analysis

#### 3.1 Were you given an opportunity to try Xonvea during your pregnancy?

Of the 749 respondents, 492 had been offered Xonvea and 257 had not. To strengthen the reliability of the findings and avoid a satisfaction bias, we actively encouraged participation from those who had not been offered the medication.

#### 3.2 Did you find Xonvea effective

Chart 1.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rcog.org.uk/guidance/browse-all-guidance/green-top-guidelines/the-management-of-nausea-and-vomiting-of-pregnancy-and-hyperemesis-gravidarum-green-top-guideline-no-69/>

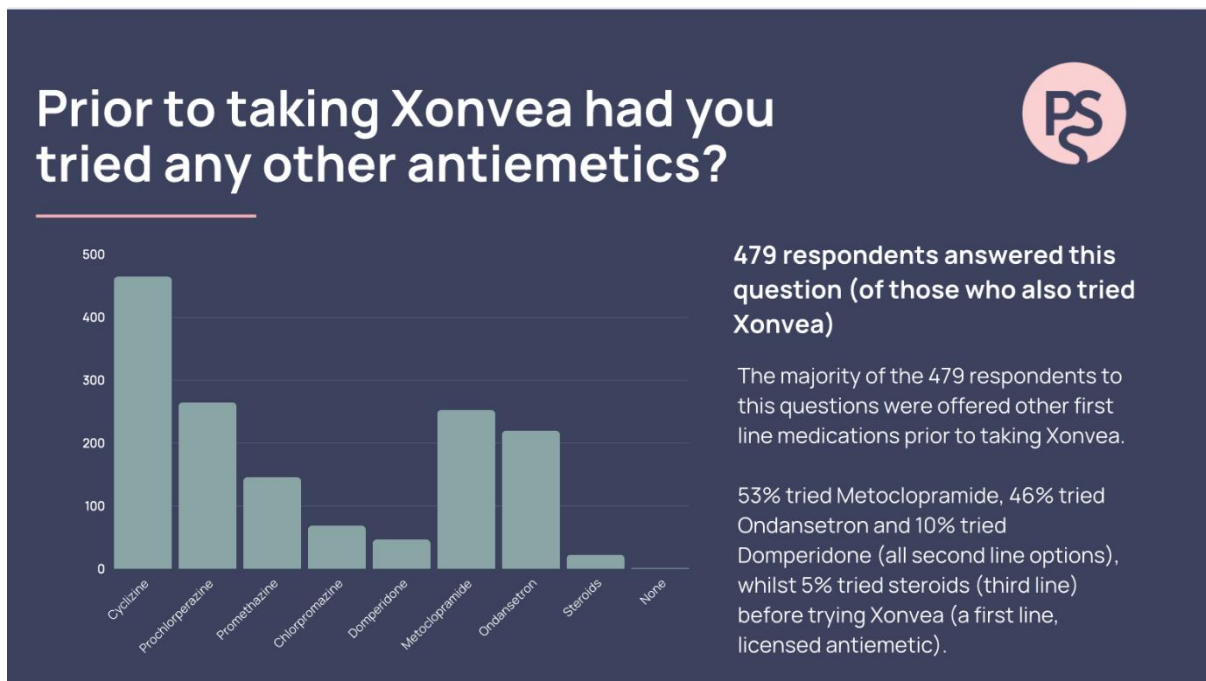
**High perceived effectiveness:** 83% effectiveness and supports an argument for earlier or more consistent access.

**Only 11% found it ineffective:** Relatively small proportion, suggesting the medication has a strong performance profile where used.

**6% who were unsure: Further research needed.** Where there mitigating factors—e.g. were they taking multiple medications at once or stopped too early?

### 3.3 Prior to taking Xonvea had you tried any other antiemetics?

Chart 2.



**Xonvea is a first-line treatment**, yet many respondents were prescribed **second- or even third-line drugs first**.

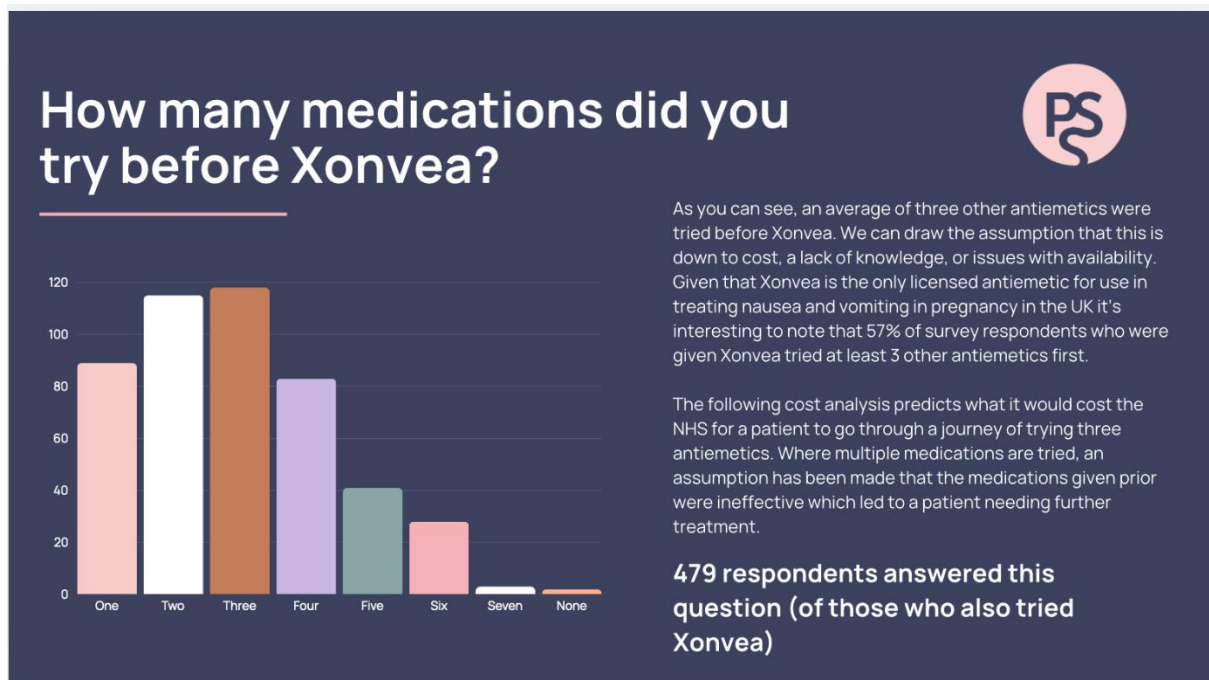
**Over half (53%)** were given Metoclopramide (a second line), just under **half (46% tried Ondansetron)** and **5% were prescribed steroids (third line) before** trying Xonvea.

This suggests a widespread lack of awareness, adherence, or access related to current RCOG guidelines and Xonvea’s status as the *only licensed antiemetic* for pregnancy in the UK.

This builds a strong case for better GP education, clearer formulary guidance, and potentially a patient-facing resource so sufferers can advocate for appropriate treatment sooner.

### 3.4 How many medications did you try before Xonvea?

Chart 3.



**57% tried three or more antiemetics** before accessing Xonvea, which is meant to be a first-line treatment.

→ This reinforces the inefficiency of current prescribing practices.

**The average of three other medications** being tried *before* Xonvea paints a clear picture of:

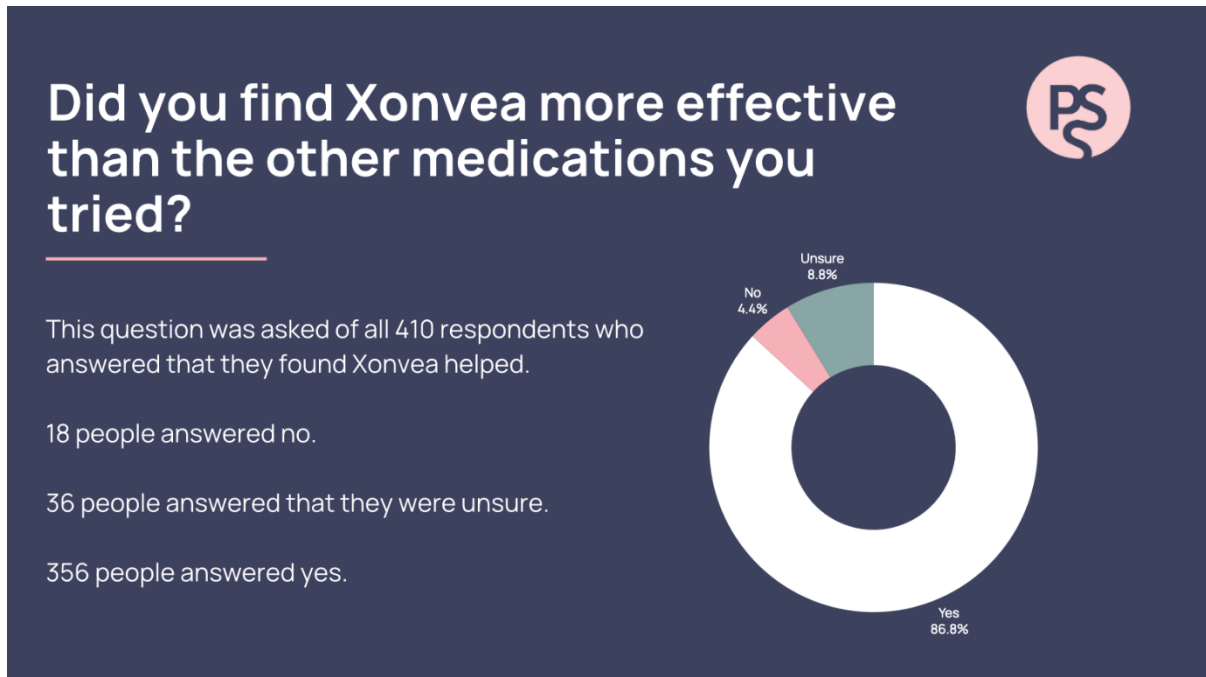
- Clinical uncertainty or lack of confidence in prescribing Xonvea.
- Possible cost-avoidance behaviour, which is short-sighted.
- Access issues (formulary, local policy, or stock).

**Cost assumption is logical:** If a patient is moving through multiple medications, it stands to reason the previous ones were ineffective leading to repeat consultations, prolonged illness, and potentially hospital care.

This directly supports the economic argument for prescribing Xonvea earlier—especially when paired with the high effectiveness already outlined.

### 3.5 Did you find Xonvea more effective than the other medications you tried?

Chart 4.



**87% (356/410)** of those who found Xonvea effective said it was *more* effective than other medications they had tried. That’s a powerful message in favour of considering Xonvea earlier in treatment plans.

The small number who said “**no**” or “**unsure**” still suggests a favourable comparison to other antiemetics.

### 3.6 Efficacy of other medications – an analysis

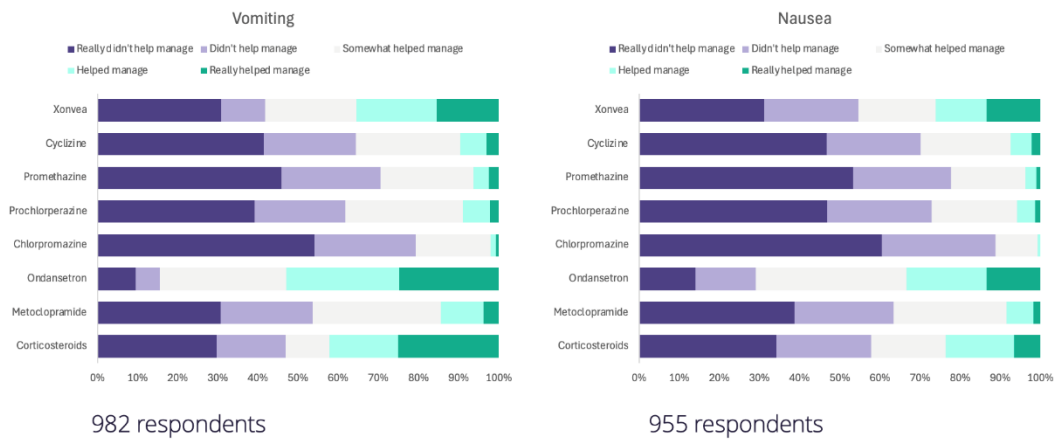
**In 2024 Pregnancy Sickness Support launched their survey “Insights on the treatment and care of Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) in the UK - A Survey conducted by Pregnancy Sickness Support”.**

It consisted of 45 questions and was advertised via a link to complete on SurveyMonkey and distributed via email list to subscribers and on main social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

1370 people responded.

## Chart 6.

### Ondansetron reported as the most effective at managing N&V, then corticosteroids and Xonvea



### Respondents were asked:

In this pregnancy, please rank the following medications based on their effectiveness in managing your VOMITING.

In this pregnancy, please rank the following medications based on their effectiveness in managing your NAUSEA.

We submit this data to demonstrate efficacy rates amongst all current medications prescribed for Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) and Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy (NVP).

As seen above the second-line medication, Ondansetron, was ranked the most effective across both symptoms, then third-line medications corticosteroids and then Xonvea, the only first-line antiemetic.

This corresponds with the 83% efficacy rate established from the **Pregnancy Sickness Support - Xonvea Feedback** survey.

## Other efficacy resources:

### 1. Ondansetron

- **Efficacy:** A systematic review and meta-analysis indicated that ondansetron had higher efficacy in terminating nausea and vomiting than metoclopramide (89.6% vs. 77.4%, respectively;  $p=0.013$ ).<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Metoclopramide<sup>4</sup>

- **Efficacy:** Metoclopramide is considered safe and effective for NVP but is generally recommended as a second-line therapy due to the risk of extrapyramidal side effects.

### 3. Other First line antiemetics

- **Efficacy:** The NICE guideline NG201 (August 2021)<sup>5</sup> provides a comprehensive comparison of pharmacological treatments for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy (NVP). Notably, it highlights that several commonly prescribed first-line medications lack robust evidence supporting their efficacy:

**Cyclizine:** No randomized controlled trial (RCT) evidence exists for its use in NVP. Older, low-quality studies have assessed a combination of cyclizine with pyridoxine, but this combination is not available in the UK.

**Prochlorperazine:** There is no RCT evidence supporting its efficacy in treating NVP.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9249360>

<sup>4</sup>

[https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7037589/#:~:text=Also%2C%20metoclopramide%20with%20pyridoxine%20was.2007\).](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7037589/#:~:text=Also%2C%20metoclopramide%20with%20pyridoxine%20was.2007).)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng201/resources/table-1-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-different-pharmacological-treatments-for-nausea-and-vomiting-in-pregnancy-pdf-9204302125>

**Chlorpromazine:** Similarly, no RCT evidence is available for its use in NVP.

**Promethazine:** Limited, moderate-quality evidence suggests benefits on vomiting frequency when combined with pyridoxine, a combination not available in the UK.

In contrast, **doxylamine/pyridoxine** (Xonvea) is the only medication specifically licensed in the UK for NVP. While the evidence in this guideline is of low to very low quality, it does show symptom relief compared with placebo and this guideline was produced before the findings from Pregnancy Sickness Support from both surveys detailed in this report.

This discrepancy is particularly noteworthy given that some Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) express reservations about prescribing Xonvea due to perceived insufficient efficacy data yet continue to prescribe other medications with even less supporting evidence.

For a detailed comparison, refer to footnote 5.

### **3.7 ICB Data –Were you given an opportunity to try Xonvea during your pregnancy?**

Post code data collected from the Survey corresponding to ICB's and respondents' location.

**NB:** Respondents were asked to provide their current county and postcode, but the survey did not specify that this should relate to where they lived during the pregnancy or pregnancies they were reflecting on. As a result, some location data may reflect where respondents live now, rather than where they were living at the time of their experience. While this may affect the geographical accuracy of some responses, it does not impact the overall findings or themes of the survey.

Chart 6.

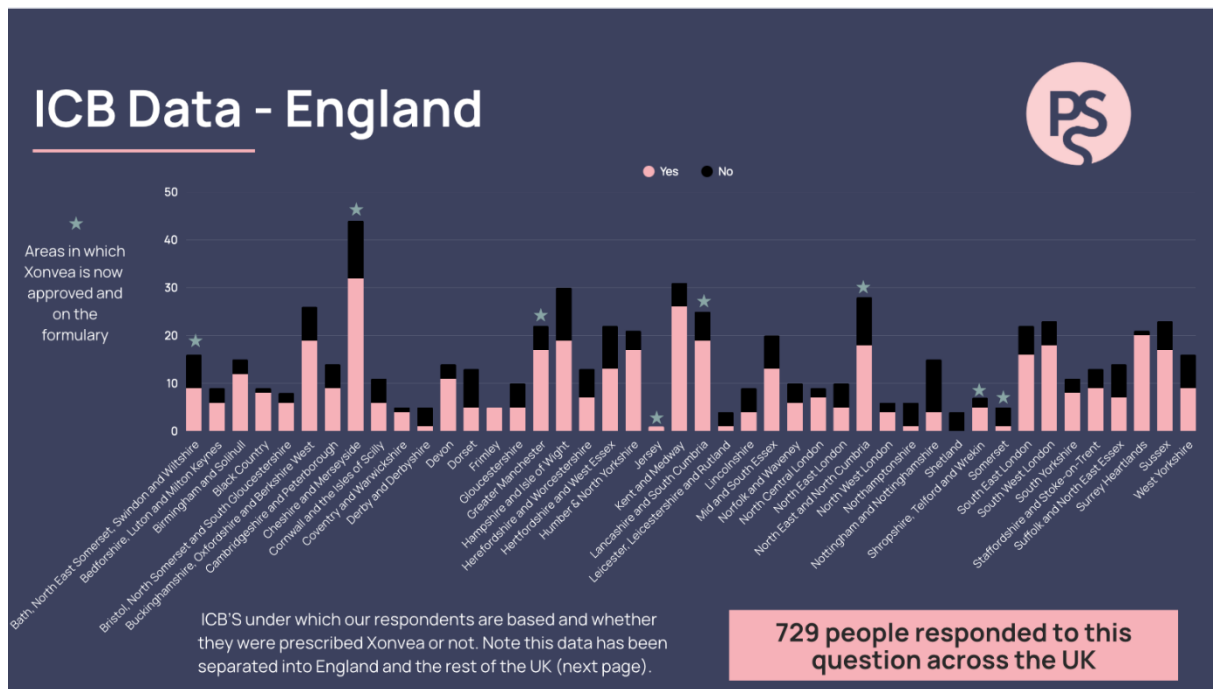
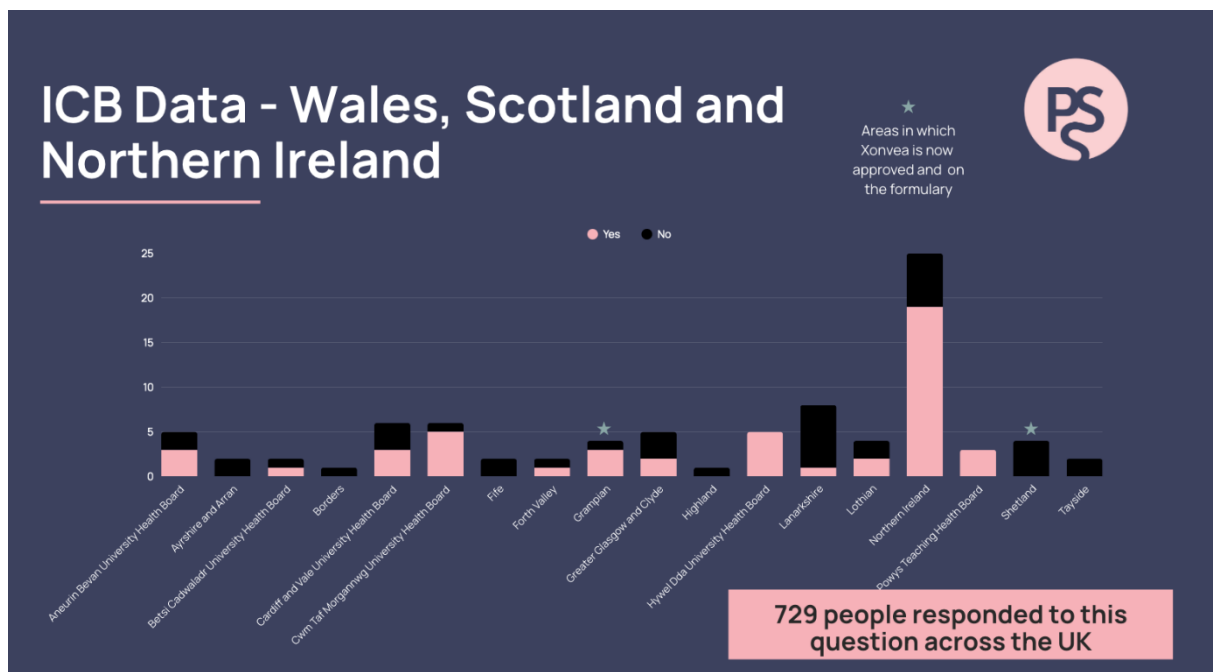


Chart 7.



In many of the ICB's mentioned in the charts 6&7, we know that Xonvea is not available on the formulary - therefore we can conclude that Xonvea is being prescribed 'off-formulary'. Whilst this is positive, it can also be difficult for NVP sufferers who are perhaps prescribed it by one healthcare professional, only to then have it withdrawn by another. This is an incredibly common situation that we hear about on the helpline at PSS.

Equally there are areas, such as Greater Manchester, in which we know that Xonvea is on the formulary, but not all sufferers were given the opportunity to try it. Further analysis is needed to understand why they didn't try it (e.g. it may have been available if they asked for it - but it just wasn't offered)

**NB:** This survey did not ask respondents in what year they were pregnant. Further research will need to be conducted to ascertain when they were pregnant to compare with the introduction of Xonvea into the RCOG Greentop Guidelines on Nausea & Vomiting in Pregnancy (NVP) and Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) No.69. This data would also enable us to compare with when Xonvea was added to specific ICB's formulary.

The areas in which we know Xonvea to be readily available are as follows: Bath and Northeast Somerset, Cheshire and Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and South Cumbria, Northeast and North Cumbria, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Somerset, Shetland, Grampian and Jersey - so further analysis could be done with these locations.

#### **Quick Analysis - Inconsistency of access and prescribing:**

- Even in areas *with* formulary approval, Xonvea isn't always offered.
- In areas *without* formulary approval, it's sometimes prescribed off-formulary—but not consistently or sustainably (e.g. it's later withdrawn).

#### **Real-world impact on patients:**

- The issue of it being prescribed and then withdrawn is emotionally and physically damaging.

### **Potential area for further research:**

- Encouraging more location-specific, time-specific research could be a recommendation going forward.

## **3.8 Cost analysis**

Based on drug cost information<sup>6</sup>, estimations regarding NHS costs are detailed in the next two tables.

The average number of medications that sufferers were asked to try was three, and therefore combination scenarios have been created based on three of the most prescribed first line medications (**Cyclizine, Promethazine and Prochlorperazine**) along with two of the most prescribed second line medications (**Metoclopramide and Ondansetron**).

Figures are based on one week's supply of each medication at the maximum dose. For Xonvea the cost is related to its suggested dose as documented in the BNF.

An estimation is made that for each new prescription a GP appointment would be needed (these medications need to be prescribed by a doctor), and the cost for that has been taken from the Kings Fund.<sup>7</sup>

Further costs for consideration are A&E/UTC or EPU visits, hospital admissions and the cost of calling out an ambulance - all of which are scenarios we hear of regularly via the helpline at Pregnancy Sickness Support.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-prescription-services>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/data-and-charts/key-facts-figures-nhs>

**Table 1.**

Medication	Cost of one box of medication to the NHS	Cost of 1 week's supply (on max suggested dosage)
Cyclizine	£3.91	£0.74
Promethazine	£13.44	£5.04
Prochlorperazine 5mg	£1.81	£1.36
Prochlorperazine Buccal	£23.33	£8.53
Metoclopramide	£0.91	£0.68
Ondansetron (4mg)	£4.95	£10.40
Ondansetron (8mg)	£4.19	£5.87
Xonvea	£28.50	£31.35

## **Data from The Kings Fund**

GP Visit - £56 per appointment

Lowest level of investigation and treatment (I&T) at an Urgent Treatment Centre - £91 per I&T

A&E department with more complex I&T - £137 - £445.

### 3.9 Cost Analysis – Medication scenarios

**Table 2.**

Cyclizine, Promethazine and Prochlorperazine (5mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £175.14	Cyclizine, Promethazine and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £184.18	Promethazine, Prochlorperazine (5mg) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £184.80	Cyclizine, Prochlorperazine (buccal) and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £187.67	Cyclizine, Metoclopramide and Ondansetron (4mg)  3 GP appointments  Total = £179.82
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**NB: This is not an exhaustive list of all options, but illustrates a cost of usual and potential combinations**

The average cost of 3 antiemetic medications at one week's supply, along with 3 GP appointments is £180.80 per sufferer.

**NB:** This figure does not factor in A&E visits, possible hospital admissions, IV fluid treatment and mental health support.

Average cost of a three-week supply of Xonvea, with 1 GP appointment is £138.65.

**NB:** Based on the recommended dose as found in the BNF<sup>8</sup> of a starting dose of 2 tablets at night for the first 2 days, then an extra tablet in the morning for 2 days and an extra tablet in the afternoon for 2 days. Continuing with the maximum dose of 4 tablets a day.

**Analysis** - While Xonvea may appear more expensive than some other medications used to treat nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, this comparison ignores the broader picture. When factoring in real-world outcomes and the overall patient journey, the value of Xonvea becomes much clearer.

**For example, one respondent shared:**

*“It stopped the vomiting, although not the nausea, and kept me out of hospital. I didn't have Xonvea for my 2015 pregnancy and was hospitalised 7 times with dehydration.”*

Seven hospital admissions for fluids far outweigh the cost of a few months of Xonvea.

**Another wrote:**

*“I was able to function effectively throughout my pregnancy—unlike my first pregnancy, where I was off work for 10 weeks and unable to function at all.”*

Ten weeks of absence, distress, and impaired daily life carries both societal and personal costs—financially, emotionally, and in terms of mental health.

**And another:**

*“In my first pregnancy, I didn't have Xonvea. I was being sick up to 50 times a day, off work, in and out of hospital for fluids. I had no quality of life. Second pregnancy, I've had*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drugs/doxylamine-with-pyridoxine/>

*Xonvea—I'm still nauseous and struggling, but no hospital admissions and it's so much better.”*

These comments are not isolated. They reflect the kind of feedback we hear daily at Pregnancy Sickness Support. When prescribed appropriately, we believe Xonvea has the potential not only to improve patient outcomes but to save the NHS money—by reducing hospital admissions, repeat appointments, and prolonged suffering.

Further health economics research would be hugely beneficial to complete the picture of the cost to society.

In total **we had 354 positive responses of how Xonvea** helped respondents and 53 responses from respondents who did not find Xonvea effective.

For balance here are three comments from those who did not find Xonvea effective.

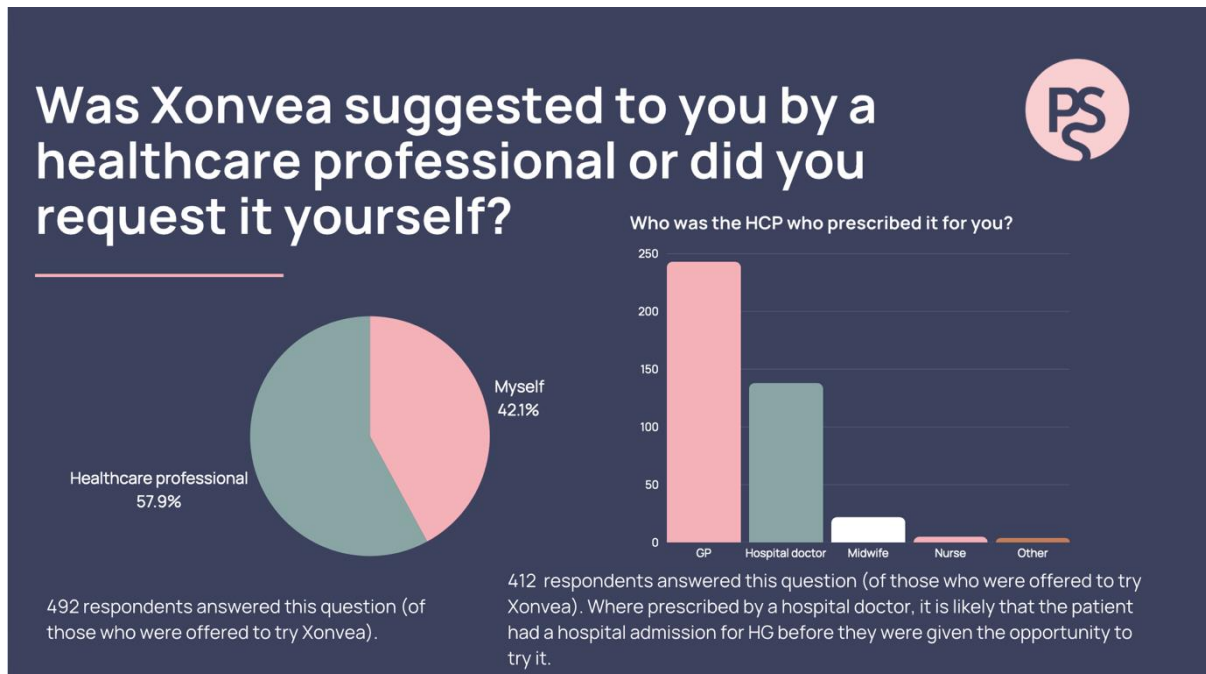
*“HG was too severe”.*

*“It was only effective when combined with metoclopramide and ondansetron and then steroids. Last pregnancy it was effective on its own. This one had other ideas!”*

*“Only worked for a small window then felt and was sick again”.*

## 4.0 How did they request Xonvea?

Chart 8.



**Over 40% of respondents had to advocate for themselves** to access Xonvea. That's a major indicator of:

- Gaps in healthcare professional awareness or confidence in prescribing it.
- A system where access is skewed towards those who are informed, assertive, and able to self-advocate—raising **equity concerns**.

**Most people are being prescribed Xonvea by a GP or hospital doctor**, which shows that it is being accessed *within both primary and secondary care*—but not necessarily in a timely or preventive way.

**If prescribed by a hospital doctor**, it likely followed a crisis point—**hospital admission**—rather than proactive management.

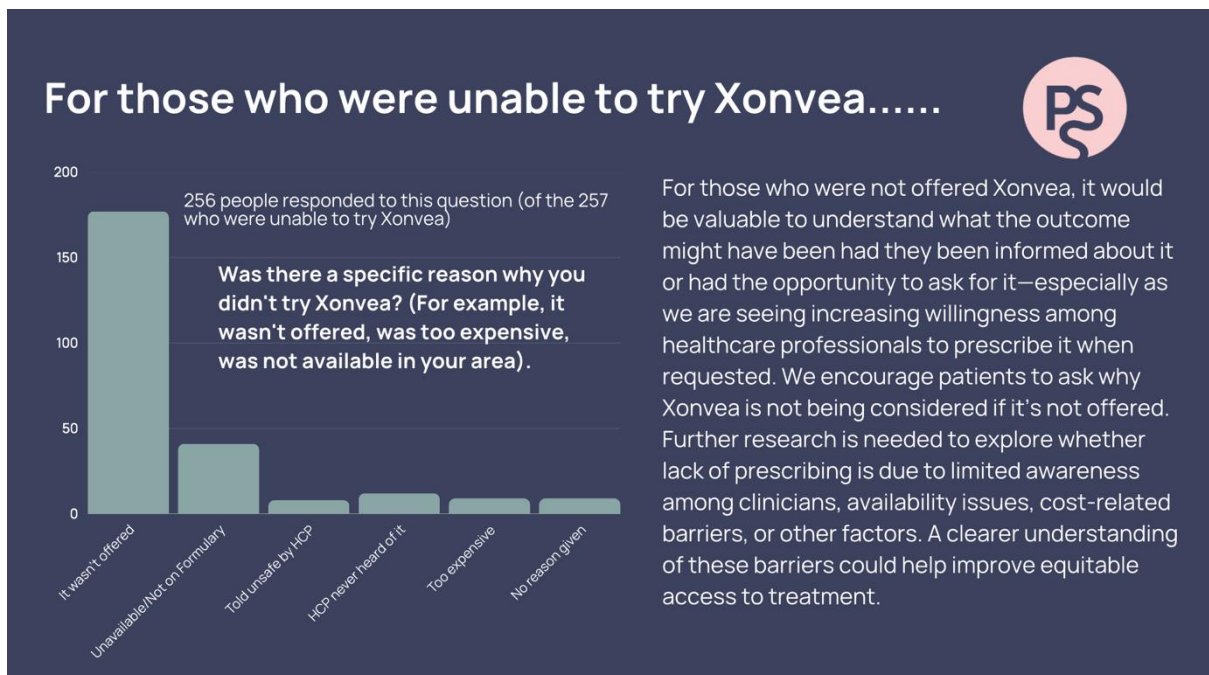
This strongly supports a call for:

- **Improved clinician education** on the RCOG guidelines and Xonvea's status.

- **Clearer prescribing guidance** across regions
- Possibly **patient-facing materials** to help sufferers know what to ask for if they're not being offered licensed, first-line treatment.
- **Earlier intervention in primary care** could prevent escalation to hospital care.
- **Standardising GP knowledge and prescribing confidence** is critical—especially as they're often the first point of contact.

## 4.1 Those who responded 'No' to being offered Xonvea

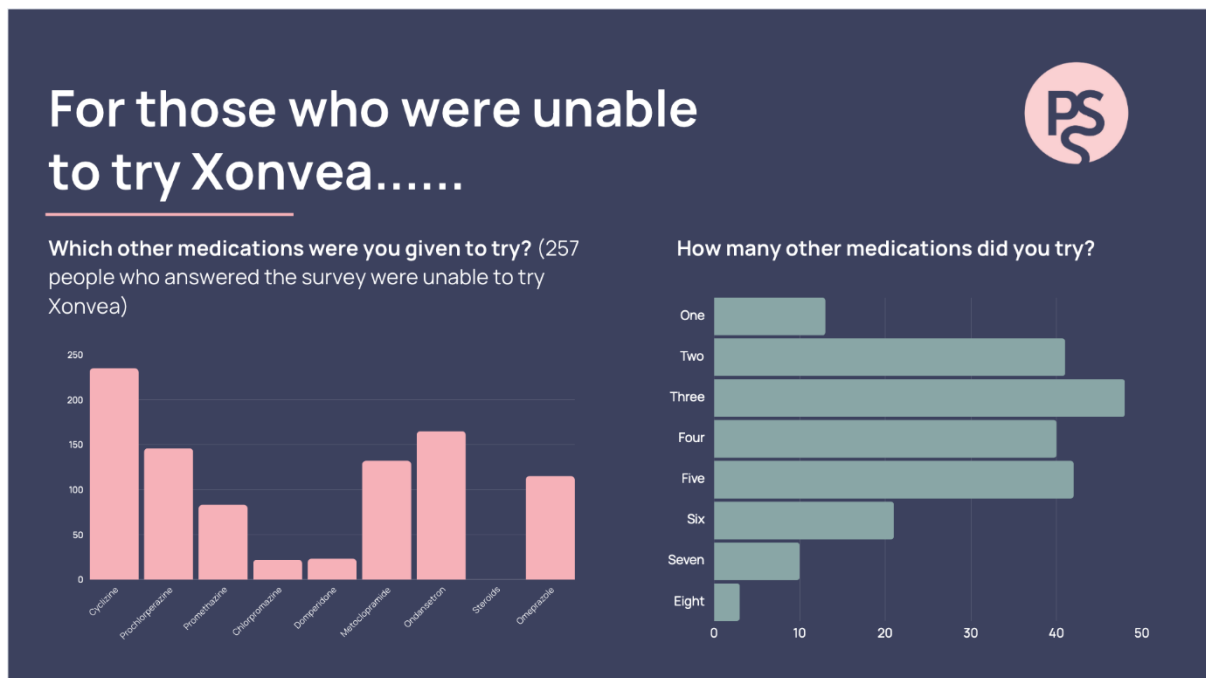
**Chart 9.**



This reinforces our earlier call for:

- **Further research into prescribing behaviour and system-level barriers**
- **Consistent messaging to patients** so they can advocate for themselves if necessary
- **Clear accountability in commissioning decisions** around formularies.

## 4.2 What and how many other medications were you offered?



This data reflects that of the 257 people who weren't given Xonvea (a first line, licensed antiemetic) to try, 165 were given Ondansetron, 132 Metoclopramide and 23 Domperidone (all second line antiemetics).

It also shows that 64% of respondents in this category were given three or more antiemetics to try - we can conclude from this that the medications they tried were ineffective. This is likely to have resulted in multiple trips to their GP, possible hospital admissions, and long periods of suffering - all of which is detrimental to the physical and mental health of the sufferer, and of cost implication to the NHS.

### 64% of patients denied Xonvea tried three or more other medications

→ These were primarily *second-line* drugs, indicating a disregard for Xonvea's first-line, licensed status. This makes a strong case that **many patients are going through ineffective treatment cycles** while a recommended option is withheld.

### Implied suffering and NHS cost

→ The logical consequence of these ineffective treatment cycles:

- Multiple GP visits
- Emergency care and admissions
- Increased risk of physical and mental health deterioration
- **Inefficient use of NHS resources**

**Crucially, these were preventable:** These individuals *never even had the chance* to try the one medication designed specifically for NVP.

This data reflects that of the 257 people who weren't given Xonvea (a first line, licensed antiemetic) to try, 165 were given Ondansetron, 132 Metoclopramide and 23 Domperidone (all second line antiemetics).

It also shows that 64% of respondents in this category were given three or more antiemetics to try - we can conclude from this that the medications they tried were ineffective. This is likely to have resulted in multiple trips to their GP, possible hospital admissions, and long periods of suffering - all of which is detrimental to the physical and mental health of the sufferer, and of cost implication to the NHS.

"I was told I was told I had to be hospitalised before they were allowed to prescribe it. It was unsafe to try before 12 weeks"

"I was told it was unsafe to try before 12 weeks."

"I got it prescribed after my 5th hospital visit for fluids but every pharmacy I went to across Nottinghamshire didn't have it. I literally tried everywhere. When calling back to the hospital I was then told by another consultant they had never heard of it and that the other consultant should never have prescribed it for me."

## 5. Conclusions

Most respondents (84%) who were able to try Xonvea reported that it was effective in treating their symptoms. Of those, 83% said it was more effective than other antiemetics they had previously tried. This suggests that, where appropriate, Xonvea can be a highly effective treatment option.

From a cost perspective, prescribing Xonvea earlier may offer better value for the NHS than cycling through multiple less effective medications. The knock-on effects of delayed treatment—such as repeat GP appointments, emergency care, and hospital admissions—represent not only increased costs but also avoidable suffering. While Xonvea is not effective for everyone, the financial risk of trialling it is low: a single box costs £28.50 and can be stopped quickly if ineffective.

Despite being the only medication licensed in the UK specifically for NVP and formally listed in the 2024 RCOG guidelines as a first-line treatment, 57% of respondents who accessed Xonvea had already tried at least three other medications first. Many were even prescribed second- or third-line drugs such as Ondansetron, Metoclopramide, and steroids before being offered Xonvea. These findings raise questions about whether cost concerns, lack of clinician awareness, or formulary restrictions are driving inappropriate sequencing of treatment.

Notably, 33% of respondents who accessed Xonvea did so only after seeing a hospital doctor—suggesting that some had to reach a point of hospital admission before being offered the drug. This reactive approach increases the burden on both patients and NHS services.

Xonvea is also being prescribed in some areas where it is not included on local formularies, demonstrating that some clinicians are willing to prescribe it off-formulary when necessary. However, this leads to inconsistent access and reports of prescriptions being withdrawn once reviewed by another healthcare professional. These inconsistencies cause confusion and distress for sufferers, many of whom turn to the Pregnancy Sickness Support helpline for advice after being told they can no longer access a treatment that helped them.

## **6. What Pregnancy Sickness Support are calling for**

### **1. Equitable access to Xonvea across all UK regions**

Every Integrated Care Board (ICB) should add Xonvea to its formulary. Women should not be denied access to the only licensed antiemetic for NVP based on postcode.

### **2. Earlier prescribing of Xonvea in line with national guidelines**

Xonvea should be considered as a first-line treatment, as outlined in the 2024 RCOG Green-top Guideline. Prescribing it only after other medications have failed contradicts best practice and causes avoidable harm.

### **3. Improved GP and hospital clinician awareness and confidence**

Over 40% of those who accessed Xonvea had to request it themselves. Clinicians need support and training to prescribe appropriately, understand the dosing, and know when it is indicated.

#### **4. Clearer local prescribing protocols and formulary alignment**

Patients should not face the distress of being prescribed a medication, finding it effective, then having it withdrawn. Trust in care is undermined when policies are inconsistent.

#### **5. Further research into prescribing barriers and inequalities**

There is a need to understand why women are not being offered Xonvea—is it cost? Lack of awareness? Commissioning restrictions? Data is needed to close this gap once on all formularies.

#### **Recognition of the wider cost of untreated NVP and HG**

Decisions about prescribing must account for the physical, mental, social, and financial costs of delayed or ineffective treatment—not just the price of a single box of medication.

## **7. Contacts**

For more information and to receive the charts and slides used in this report, please contact:

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Pregnancy Sickness Support  
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[WWW.PregnancySicknessSupport.Org.UK](http://WWW.PregnancySicknessSupport.Org.UK)

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## **P-06-1552 Stop building industrial solar ‘farms’ close to residential buildings and within village boundaries.**

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

**Reference:** SR25/12212-3

### Introduction

**Petition Number:** P-06-1552

**Petition title:** Stop building industrial solar ‘farms’ close to residential buildings and within village boundaries.

**Text of petition:** Solar farms are increasing throughout the UK and Wales. Bringing unsightly structures into our countryside and reducing farmland.

With the high winds experienced during stormy weather damaging solar ‘farms’ causing damage which causes alarm to local residents due to the risk of shattered solar panels on their land.

Having solar ‘farms’ near residential property reduces value & affects sales.

I propose that we keep solar ‘farms’ away from residential areas and outside village boundaries.

<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/huge-storm-wrecked-solar-farm-30556529.amp>



<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/General/General-Advice-00769-2-Attachment.pdf>

<http://trefeglwys-solar-farm.co.uk/>

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/24918555-solar-farm-planned-land-trefeglwys-powys/>

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

## 1. Background

### 1.1. The current state of solar PV in Wales

The Welsh Government's [Energy in Wales report 2023](#) said that a total of 86,398 solar PV projects provided 1,291 MW of capacity and an estimated 1,184 MWh of electricity generation. This makes solar PV the largest renewable technology in Wales by capacity, and the third largest by generation, behind only onshore (3,106 MWh) and offshore wind (2,163 MWh).

There has been a [large increase in the deployment of solar PV projects](#) in Wales in recent years. Almost four times as many projects were commissioned in 2023 (15,300) compared to 2021 (3,900). The new solar PV capacity installed in 2023 (108 MW) was more than double the amount installed in 2022.

### 1.2. Planning consent

Some types of development are considered by planning law to be 'permitted' and are therefore granted development consent without the need for a planning application. Small installations of solar panels, either on roofs, walls, or ground-mounted panels, may be considered 'permitted development' under [Welsh Government planning guidance](#).

Larger solar projects require planning consent and are subject to approval by the relevant planning authority, which is determined based on proposed generating capacity, as shown in the table below.

Project capacity (solar)	Consenting
<10 MW	Local planning authority (LPA)
10 – 350 MW	Welsh Ministers ( <u>Developments of National Significance</u> (DNS))
>350 MW	UK Secretary of State ( <u>Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects</u> )

Proposals for large-scale energy development are classed as ‘Developments of National Significance’ (DNS) and are determined by the Welsh Ministers. However, the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 introduced a new consenting regime known as an Infrastructure Consent for ‘Significant Infrastructure Projects’, which is being established to replace the existing DNS regime.

Proposals will continue to be dealt with under the existing DNS regime until the new regime is in force.

### 1.3. National planning policy

Planning applications are determined in accordance with national and local planning policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In principle, any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being material.

The Welsh Government’s national planning policy is set out in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Future Wales sets out the Welsh Government’s policies on development and land use in a spatial context. It has development plan status and forms the highest tier of development plan in Wales.

Policies 17 and 18 of Future Wales (see page 95) deal with renewable and low carbon energy. Policy 17 states:

*The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs. In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales’ international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.*

Policy 18 sets out that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects qualifying as DNS will be permitted, subject to a list of criteria contained within the policy. This includes that **“there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings”**.

However, national planning policy does not mandate any set boundaries between solar developments and settlements. How this policy is interpreted and applied to individual applications would be a matter for the Welsh Ministers as the decision maker (in the case of DNS), and ultimately the courts.

It is worth noting that locating solar developments away from communities may potentially impact upon agricultural land. In March 2022, the Welsh Government issued a [letter to Chief Planning Officers](#) clarifying policies in relation to the development of solar on agricultural land. It sets out that:

*...where BMV [**Best and Most Versatile**] land is identified within a proposed solar PV array development, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission.*

It's also worth noting that in accordance with Future Wales, “sites in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are considered unsuitable for large-scale wind and solar” developments.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has statutory duties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#). The Welsh Government has also set a target for renewable electricity generation to be equivalent to 70% of Wales' annual electricity consumption by 2030, rising to 100% by 2035.

As outlined, there are multiple factors to take into account when determining applications for solar developments in accordance with planning policy and a balance to be struck between meeting renewable energy targets, protecting AONBs and agricultural land and avoiding adverse impacts on communities.

In her letter to the Chair dated 25 November, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS refers to the various planning policies discussed in this briefing. The Cabinet Secretary also highlights the Welsh Government's guidance on [‘Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales’](#) which,

although not formal policy, “could be a material consideration to inform potential planning conditions”. The Cabinet Secretary says this guidance highlights:

*...site considerations for identifying suitable locations and includes, amongst other things, sites capable of screening from surrounding land, with perimeter planting and screens, or where sites are visible, the possibility of integrating the design of the solar array into the existing landscape pattern, and sites with low impacts on existing settlements and communities.*

The letter goes on to state the Welsh Government’s ‘[Development Management Manual Wales \(2025\)](#)’ identifies that:

*...when determining planning applications [planning authorities] must consider any relevant view on planning matters expressed by neighbouring occupiers, local residents and any other third parties. The Manual also identifies that the effects of a development on, for example, amenity, health and public safety can be material considerations in the assessment of a planning application. However, arguing a right to a view, or potential loss of property value, are not considered to be relevant planning matters and therefore would not be material considerations in determining applications.*

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

On 11 June 2025, there was a [Senedd debate on a Welsh Conservatives motion](#) calling on the Welsh Government to: announce a moratorium on applications for solar panels on agricultural land; review solar energy potential in Wales; and develop a solar strategy for Wales. The motion was not passed.

An [open debate in Plenary on 19 March 2025](#) addressed the question of whether renewables alone can meet Wales’ energy needs. The debate included discussion of the most appropriate locations to site solar panels.

In June the [Committee considered a petition](#) calling for solar panels to be sited next to roads and railways, in industrial areas and over car parks. The Committee closed that petition with the intention of keeping a watching brief on the issue of where solar developments are located.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1552  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00945/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

25 November 2025

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Thank you for your letter concerning Petition P-06-1552 - 'Stop building industrial solar 'farms' close to residential buildings and within village boundaries'. Your letter is seeking my views on this matter prior to your formal consideration of the petition. It would not be appropriate to comment on any specific proposals, and therefore I would refer the committee to national planning policy relevant to solar developments, along with development management guidance.

Welsh Government planning policy on solar development is set out in [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#) and [Planning Policy Wales](#) (PPW) and is further supported by [Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales](#) (December 2024) which was prepared by the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Future Wales is a national development plan that sets out a long-term vision for land use and development across Wales. It was adopted in February 2021 and forms part of the statutory development plan for Wales, sitting above strategic development plans (yet to be adopted) and local development plans.

Future Wales policies 17 and 18 set out the Welsh Government's planning policies for renewable energy. Policy 17 states that the Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs. Applications for large-scale wind and solar - Developments of National Significance (DNS) - are not permitted in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment. Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.

Policy 18 sets out the criteria that need to be considered if a DNS is to be permitted. Developers are required to provide robust evidence to support and justify their proposals so

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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.

that communities, designated areas and landscapes, and habitats and species, are protected from unacceptable adverse impacts, including visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings. Assessments of solar impacts on communities include, for example, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance and cumulative impact studies where necessary.

DNS are submitted to [Planning Environment Decisions Wales](#) for consideration. Examination is by Planning Inspector and final decisions are made by Welsh Ministers (or Planning Inspectors for projects between 10 MW and 50 MW). The application process for DNS and guidance on engaging in the process are set out in [Developments of national significance \(DNS\): guidance](#) and [Developments of national significance \(DNS\): engaging with the process](#).

DNS in the context of solar development constitutes developments of between 10 MW and 350 MW. Projects above 350 MW would fall under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime and are non devolved. Projects below 10 MW are the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

PPW Chapter 5 (section 5.9) sets out planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy development. Other policies pertinent to the consideration of solar development may include Chapter 6 (section 6.4.5) Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (Section 6 Duty), and Chapter 3 (section 3.58) Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.

Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales (chapter 6) sets out design considerations for solar farms. Whilst this document is not formal policy it does promote best practice and could be a material consideration to inform potential planning conditions. Section 6.3 highlights site considerations for identifying suitable locations and includes, amongst other things, sites capable of screening from surrounding land, with perimeter planting and screens, or where sites are visible, the possibility of integrating the design of the solar array into the existing landscape pattern, and sites with low impacts on existing settlements and communities. Sections 6.4 to 6.10 provide further advice on solar farm design matters.

In terms of development management, the '[Development Management Manual Wales \(2025\)](#)' identifies that when determining planning applications LPAs must consider any relevant view on planning matters expressed by neighbouring occupiers, local residents and any other third parties. The Manual also identifies that the effects of a development on, for example, amenity, health and public safety can be material considerations in the assessment of a planning application. However, arguing a right to a view, or potential loss of property value, are not considered to be relevant planning matters and therefore would not be material considerations in determining applications.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio

## P-06-1553 Increase investment and action in nature-based flood management to protect Welsh communities

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

Reference: SR25/12417-1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1553

**Petition title:** Increase investment and action in nature-based flood management to protect Welsh communities.

**Text of petition:** Flooding affects 1 in 8 properties in Wales, causing tragedy for many. We, the Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales, call on the Welsh Government to commit to increasing investment and action towards nature-based flood management (NFM) to better protect communities, improve mental wellbeing, and restore river health. We urge the allocation of at least 10% of flood prevention funds to NFM.

We also call on the Welsh government to consider:

- Include support for farmers in the Sustainable Farming Scheme to improve vegetation, plant trees, and restore habitats;
- Keep the commitment to introducing beavers in suitable areas; and
- Create conservation areas along natural floodplains to enhance resilience and biodiversity.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.



# 1. Background

Approximately one in seven properties in Wales is at risk of flooding. Climate change has increased the intensity of winter rainfall in the UK in recent decades, and is expected to drive further increases in rainfall and storm frequency in the future. By 2120, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) expects an additional 110,000 Welsh properties to be at risk of flooding from surface water and the sea.

NRW defines natural flood management (NFM) as “a means of working with natural processes by implementing nature-based interventions to help reduce the risk of flooding”. This contrasts with traditional ‘hard engineering’ approaches to flood management, such as dredging and physical barriers.

Inland NFM approaches typically aim to slow the flow of water to prevent water bodies and drainage systems becoming overwhelmed. Examples include:

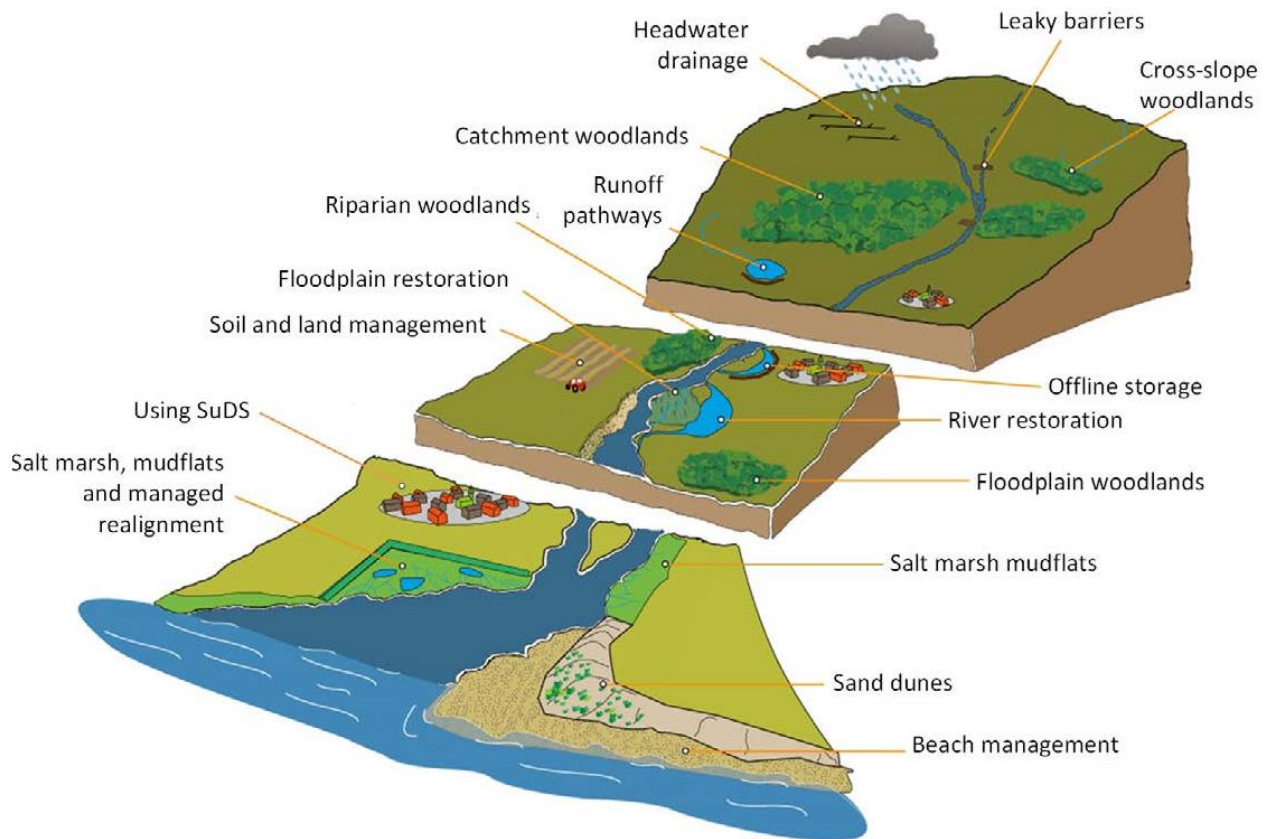
- storing water in upland catchments through woodland planting, installing ‘leaky’ barriers, and utilising runoff pathways such as floodplains;
- restoring the natural meander of rivers, to slow the flow of water to built-up areas downstream; and
- modifying urban infrastructure using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), vegetation planting, and porous pavements.

In the coastal environment, NFM methods include the protection provided by sand dunes, salt marshes, and other natural structures that act as a barrier between the sea and at-risk built assets such as homes.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water’s (DCWW) RainScape Llanelli project provides an example of NFM deployment in Wales. The scheme aims to slow or prevent rainwater from entering the sewage system to avoid it becoming overwhelmed. DCWW planted almost 10,000 trees, created vegetation-filled channels and basins, and planted strips of grass to absorb rainwater.

The diagram below provides examples of NFM interventions in a river catchment.

Figure 1. Diagram of NFM interventions in a river catchment.



Source: [Environment Agency](#), [Welsh Government](#).

European beavers were hunted to extinction in Wales in the Middle Ages. Beavers significantly impact their local environment by creating dams that store water and reduce flow rates. A study by the Environment Agency found that beaver activity in England had reduced the impact of flooding and drought five years after reintroduction.

In 2024, the Welsh Government announced its support for the managed re-introduction of beavers in Wales, citing a potential role in NFM, improving water quality, and creating biodiverse habitats. In October 2025, it announced that beavers would have legal protection for the first time through classification as a native species.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's National Strategy for Flooding and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) outlines its support for NFM and hybrid schemes partially incorporating NFM. The Welsh Government runs annual FCERM funding rounds and has funded annual NFM pilot and accelerator programmes since 2020, which

have formed a relatively small component of the overall FCERM budget. It made a 2021 Programme for Government commitment to:

Deliver nature-based flood management in all major river catchments to expand wetland and woodland habitats.

In the most recent (2025-26) NFM Fund, the Welsh Government allocated £3.4m to 23 projects across Wales. For comparison, its total FCERM capital funding for that year was £36m, although it says it allocated £77m for flood mitigation in total (including revenue funding for NRW and local authorities).

The Welsh Government has announced a successor NFM Fund for 2026-27, although it has not specified how much funding it will make available and says “there is no guarantee funding will be made available for the scheme in future years”.

The Welsh Government announced its final Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) in July 2025. From 2026, the SFS will provide payments to farmers who fulfil certain criteria. In the scheme outline, NFM is cited as an example of a possible ‘Collaborative Action’, for which farmers may be eligible for additional payments.

Responding to the petition, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, also highlighted the potential recognition of conservation areas along natural floodplains as Protected Sites. This would contribute to the 30by30 commitment – to protect 30% of land, freshwater, and sea for people and nature by 2030. The Welsh Government says it is “exploring a pipeline approach” for supporting and improving these sites.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee carried out an inquiry in 2025 looking at the response by public and private authorities to Storm Bert and Storm Darragh. Inquiry contributors consistently supported greater use of nature-based solutions for flood management. However, the Committee found “planning and permitting rules can present significant barriers to implementation”.

The Committee’s report made a series of recommendations to the Welsh Government related to NFM, including:

- the prioritisation of scaling-up nature-based solutions, and ensuring that interventions are appropriately funded;

- that farmers and landowners are supported to understand their responsibilities and opportunities related to NFM;
- providing an update on how NFM is being embedded into policy frameworks; and
- providing reassurance that NFM schemes will continue to be funded beyond 2025-26.

The Welsh Government accepted all of the Committee's recommendations relating to NFM.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1553  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01651/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

19 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 29 September 2025 regarding the petition to increase investment and action in nature-based flood management to protect Welsh communities. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Welsh Government actively promotes Natural Flood Management (NFM), and supports Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), to work in collaboration with landowners and farmers to pursue Nature Based Solutions (NBS). This work aims to reduce flood risk and to protect and enhance our natural environment.

From building hard defences to introducing NBS, we are committed to keeping communities safe from flooding. With the impact of climate change increasing the frequency and severity of flooding, we are backing our words with record investment and tangible actions to protect people across Wales.

We have made £2 million available for NFM projects in 2025-26 – this has funded projects that is supporting activities such as riparian tree planting, leaky dam installations and the construction and monitoring of wetlands. The Expression of Interest window for the 2026–27 NFM Fund is now open. We are also progressing work on a catchment planning roadmap, in line with [our response](#) to the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales's report, Building Resilience to Flooding in Wales by 2050. This will provide a strategic framework for managing flood risk and water resources at a catchment scale, involving stakeholders as policy development progresses.

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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.

The Sustainable Farming Scheme will commence on 1 January 2026 and will support farmers to deliver benefits for flood management. For example, we have a Scheme Requirement for 10% of each farm to be maintained as habitat, and for all semi-natural habitats to be maintained in line with a set of measurable outcomes. This will benefit nature, carbon storage and help reduce the risk of downstream flooding.

There is also a Universal Action for those entering the Scheme to create a “Tree and Hedgerow Planting Opportunity Plan” to encourage all farmers to consider where an increase in tree and hedgerow planting is possible.

For those farmers who want to go further, there will be more targeted site-specific opportunities available to restore and enhance habitats.

The Welsh Government also supports moving towards the managed reintroduction of European beavers in Wales. By building dams, beavers create wetlands that store water, helping to mitigate flood risks downstream. Their dams can also filter pollutants to improve water quality in rivers. They also support biodiversity, providing habitats for countless species from amphibians to birds to aquatic plants.

I recently announced the Welsh Government has agreed to extend legal protections to European beavers in Wales. This will ensure beavers are recognised as a native species and afforded legal protection as a European Protected Species, making it an offence to deliberately harm them or damage their habitats. The legislative amendments will be brought forward in this Senedd term.

Of course, there will be areas of concern that need careful, collaborative management and robust evidence will guide our next steps. A Welsh Beaver Forum is being established, and the first meeting will take place over the coming weeks.

Through the [30by30 Framework for Wales](#), conservation areas along natural floodplains could be recognised as Protected Sites or Naturfa sites (Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures), provided they are managed to support sustained biodiversity outcomes - even if their primary function is flood protection or water management.

To support the identification and development of Naturfa sites, Wales is exploring a pipeline approach, enabling candidate sites to be supported and improved until they meet the full criteria for recognition. This inclusive model encourages broader engagement across people, places, and partnerships.

Recognising conservation areas along natural floodplains as Naturfa sites could make a meaningful contribution to Wales’s Regional Ecological Networks (RENs) - a key delivery mechanism for our 30by30 commitment. Integrating these areas into RENs strengthens ecological connectivity across Welsh catchments and landscapes, supporting species movement, habitat restoration, and climate resilience.

This approach is underpinned by the Environment (Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill, which provides the legislative foundation to deliver our 30by30 commitment.

Once again, thank you for writing to me on this important topic. I hope this information is helpful to you as you begin your first formal consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Carolyn Thomas MS

Chair, Petitions Committee

Senedd Cymru

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Thank you for providing us with the Cabinet Secretary's response to our petition calling for increased investment and action in nature-based flood management (NFM) to protect Welsh communities. We appreciate the Committee's consideration of this issue and the opportunity to comment in advance of your formal discussion.

Having reviewed the response from the Cabinet Secretary, we wish to raise several areas where key issues remain unclear or unaddressed. We hope these can be explored further by the Committee, particularly given the escalating severity of flooding events in Wales-most recently highlighted by the devastating flooding in Monmouth.

### **1. Lack of clarity on increased funding for NFM and the 10% commitment**

While the Cabinet Secretary outlines that £2 million has been made available for NFM projects in 2025–26 and notes that the next funding round has opened for 2026–27, the response does not address our core request:

Will Welsh Government commit to allocating at least 10% of the national flood prevention budget to NFM?

Furthermore, it remains unclear what proportion of current flood-prevention expenditure is spent on traditional engineered defences compared to nature-based measures. Without this baseline, it is impossible to assess progress or ambition in rebalancing flood-risk management towards natural systems.

Given the urgency demonstrated by recent extreme flooding, can the Committee seek clearer commitments on funding, proportional allocation, and long-term investment trajectories?

### **2. Welsh Government's position on the 2050 flooding-resilience target**

The Cabinet Secretary references work aligned with the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales report Building Resilience to Flooding in Wales by 2050, including development of a catchment planning roadmap.

However, the response does not confirm:

- Whether Welsh Government is formally committed to achieving full resilience by 2050
- What interim or milestone targets exist between now and 2050
- How progress will be measured in the context of rapidly intensifying climate impacts

2050 is 25 years away, and communities across Wales are already facing unprecedented levels of flood risk. We ask that the Committee seek clarity on whether the Government considers

2050 an active target, and if so, how it intends to deliver measurable progress in the short and medium term.

### **3. Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) – voluntary uptake and effectiveness**

The Cabinet Secretary states that the SFS will support flood-management outcomes, including maintaining 10% habitat and planning for tree and hedgerow opportunities.

However, the SFS is voluntary, and:

- The “Tree and Hedgerow Planting Opportunity Plan” requires planning only not delivery
- There is no mechanism described to ensure meaningful uptake of NFM-relevant options in strategically important areas
- There is no explanation of how public money invested through the SFS will be targeted to achieve rapid flood-risk reduction across catchments

We therefore ask the Committee to request clarity from Welsh Government on:

1. How it will ensure sufficient take-up of SFS actions where they matter most for flood mitigation.
2. Whether the Government has modelled the impacts of different levels of SFS participation on catchment-scale water retention and absorption.
3. How communities can understand what contribution the SFS will—or will not—make to future flood resilience under projected climate change scenarios.

### **4. Beaver reintroduction – timeline and strategic planning**

We welcome the Cabinet Secretary’s commitment to the managed reintroduction of the European beaver, including granting it European Protected Species status and establishing a Welsh Beaver Forum.

To maximise their well-documented natural flood-management benefits, we ask the Committee to seek clarity on:

- How Welsh Government intends to develop and publish a full reintroduction plan
- The expected timeline for beavers to return to major Welsh catchments
- Whether the Government envisages widespread re-establishment within the next 10–15 years for meaningful climate-adaptation benefits

### **5. Naturfa / OECMs – support and incentives**

The Cabinet Secretary’s response outlines how floodplain conservation areas may be recognised as Naturfa sites, and how a pipeline approach will support candidate sites.

However, the response does not detail:

- What financial or practical incentives will help landowners transition to this form of land management

- How Naturfa designations will be integrated with flood-risk priorities at catchment scale
- Further clarity on these points would help assess how viable and impactful Naturfa could be in supporting NFM ambitions.

## **6. Involving flood-affected communities in land-management decisions**

The response does not explain how Welsh Government ensures that communities experiencing repeated and severe flooding are directly involved in:

- Land-use decisions that affect their safety
- Catchment-scale planning
- Discussions between communities and landowners whose practices directly shape downstream flood risk

This democratic and participatory aspect is essential for effective, just, and trusted adaptive management.

While we welcome many positive elements in the Cabinet Secretary's letter, there remain significant gaps in delivery pathways, measurable commitments, and long-term funding clarity. We hope the Petitions Committee will consider pressing the Welsh Government for detailed responses on the above points to ensure that nature-based flood management is deployed with the urgency and ambition that the current climate emergency requires.

Finally, as the Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales, we would appreciate the opportunity to observe the Committee's consideration of this petition. We note that the session is marked as a hybrid meeting and would be grateful for guidance on how we may attend-either by joining online or by sitting in the public gallery.

We look forward to the Committee's discussion and to continuing engagement to protect Welsh communities through resilient, nature-based solutions.

Yours sincerely,

Menna Roberts

Youth Climate Ambassadors for Wales

# Technocamps

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025  
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

**Reference:** SR25/12648-5

**Petition Number:** [P-06-1565](#)

**Petition title:** Continue funding Technocamps to provide the support that schools and teachers across Wales rely on

**Text of petition:** Welsh Government has stopped funding Welsh universities (Technocamps) to support Welsh teachers, and instead is giving £1.4M to York University to provide on-line resources for this. This is outrageous: both in the loss of critical local in-person support for Welsh teachers, and in the disrespect shown towards Wales and Welsh universities that are eager to support their local schools but are having their funding for this taken away and given -in far greater amounts- to an English university.

**Additional information from the petitioner:**

Since 2014, Welsh Government has funded Welsh universities (Technocamps) to help all teachers across Wales cope with the challenges of digital education, through in-person bilingual training and guidance. Teachers still face increasingly difficult challenges due to rapid developments in digital technology, and have become reliant on Technocamps support and understanding of the Welsh Curriculum. The success of many DfES initiatives (DCF, DigiTech quals, micro:bits, cyber and AI projects, etc) relies heavily on Technocamps support.

Astonishingly, only 7% of the Curriculum support funding goes to the Science and Technology AoLE, in two grants to England-based organisations; the remaining 93% goes to the 5 other AoLEs. Providing so little support for the Science and Technology AoLE -and particularly computing and digital technology- is frightening and inexplicable, as it can only lead to a decline in attainment in digital and STEM subjects, and ultimately in economic prosperity for Wales.



## 1. Background

Technocamps is a pan-Wales schools programme led by the College of Science at Swansea University with hubs in other Welsh universities. It is a computer science initiative whose main goal is to support digital upskilling across Wales by providing training for teachers and workshops for pupils on digital competence.

Technocamps has a 'STEM enrichment' programme in secondary schools and a 'Playground computing' programme in primary schools. Sessions offer support with coding and programming, problem solving and other 'unplugged' activities. They are delivered either virtually, in schools or in one of the regional hubs based in universities. Technocamps also provides training and professional learning for teachers, as well as opportunities to people in employment and working with businesses.

Further information on Technocamps can be found on its [website](#).

## 2. Welsh Government action

As the petition text and additional information outlines, the Welsh Government has provided funding to Technocamps to support computer science education and the Curriculum for Wales. Some information regarding this can be found in an [article on the Welsh Government's Education Wales blog from August 2020](#) and this [Welsh Government media release from 2018](#).

Technocamps' [website says](#) its programmes are "all free to the recipient, as they are fully-funded by the Welsh Government and HEFCW [Medr]."

In November 2024, the Welsh Government launched a **new grant programme to support the Curriculum for Wales**, which began its roll out in September 2022 and is now in place in all year groups up to and including Year 10. In [June 2025](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced that the [Curriculum for Wales grant support programme](#) would provide £44 million over three years to support schools in implementing the curriculum. The aim is to make sure "teaching professionals across Wales can access the expertise, advice and professional learning they need".

Grant awards were announced in September and included [£1.4 million for STEM Learning UK](#), in relation to "teaching digital with confidence". **Technocamps have been unsuccessful in applying for funding** and have [submitted this petition as well as urging Members of the Senedd to express concern](#) over the decision.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education's letter to the Committee, responding to the petition, explains the **Welsh Government's rationale** for its grant allocation decisions. It refers to the "clear criteria" for the grant and says that there has been a "change of emphasis" with a "move away from previous approaches to STEM funding, which have focused on direct delivery to learners", towards "consistent, national available professional learning". It says:

*This change in emphasis was made clear to Technocamps at the outset of the bidding process.*

The letter also states that Technocamps' existing funding was due to run out at the end of the 2024/25 academic year but was extended for 2025/26 so it could fulfil bookings already taken.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue of Technocamps' funding was raised by Natasha Asghar MS in Plenary on 22 October 2025 (see paragraphs 314-315). The Cabinet Secretary responded (see paragraph 388) with similar information as contained in her letter to this Committee regarding the petition.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1565  
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/01267/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

18 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter regarding Petition P-06-1565 submitted by Beti Williams MBE. I welcome the opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

The Welsh Government recognises the valuable contribution Technocamps has made over many years in supporting digital education in Wales.

To provide context, in November 2024, I launched the new Curriculum for Wales Grant Programme, with £44 million of funding being provided over the next 3 years. The programme called for proposals on a range of priorities, including Computing and Digital Skills. The aim was to significantly expand professional learning opportunities in this area, particularly around emerging technologies like AI and cybersecurity. This shift responded to practitioner feedback asking for consistent, national available professional learning opportunities and marked a move away from previous approaches to STEM funding, which had focused on direct delivery to learners. This change in emphasis was made clear to Technocamps at the outset of the bidding process.

All grant applications went through a competitive process, supported by robust appraisal and moderation that closely considered each application against clear criteria. Technocamps applied twice under the computing and digital skills priority. They were unsuccessful on both occasions due to the insufficient focus on national professional learning. Bids could only be considered on the basis of applications submitted and the content of that application was entirely in Technocamps' control.

At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, curriculum funding for Technocamps came to an end, with them receiving all the funding agreed under the previous grant arrangements. Over summer 2025, we increased Technocamps' funding by £100,000, extending their existing grant to the end of the academic year. This was to allow them to meet bookings with schools. It was made very clear to Technocamps that there was no guarantee of future funding beyond this.

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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.

£1.4 million over the next 3 years has been awarded to STEM Learning UK, a not-for-profit organisation operating as a limited company that is governed by the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield, York and Sheffield Hallam. STEM Learning UK has worked with partners in Wales for more than a decade. This includes Cardiff-based See Science, which has supported STEM Learning UK as the Wales delivery partner for the STEM Ambassadors programme since 2010. To ensure this programme meets the needs of Welsh practitioners, See Science will continue to be a key partner in delivering the Teaching Digital with Confidence programme to ensure the same high standards. The award was made based on the strength of their application alone.

While the petition claims this is an exclusively English language, online programme, that is inaccurate. The programme will be delivered in both Welsh and English and will include a blend of face-to-face and online professional learning.

We fully recognise the challenges teachers face in keeping pace with rapid technological change. However, the Welsh Government's shift in focus—from direct learner delivery to professional learning for practitioners—was based on feedback from schools and settings and reflects a strategic move toward building practitioners' confidence and knowledge. The new programme is designed to equip teachers themselves with the skills and understanding to deliver high-quality digital education. This approach ensures that these are embedded across the system and provides a long term, sustainable solution.

The programme comprises of 20 new professional learning courses for teachers across Wales, covering topics such as artificial intelligence, cyber security, coding and computational thinking.

The petition claims only a small proportion of funding allocated is focussed on STEM subjects. However, STEM and digital practitioners will also benefit from the nearly £20 million investment over the next 3 years for raising standards in literacy and numeracy. These are foundational skills that support learners to access the breadth of the curriculum, including STEM subjects.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this petition. The Welsh Government remains committed to supporting high-quality digital education across Wales. We will continue to engage with stakeholders, including schools, practitioners, and delivery partners, to ensure our new programme meets the needs of practitioners and learners in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Beti Williams MBE  
Patron of Technocamps  
27 November 2025

Dear Kayleigh,

Many thanks for providing me the opportunity to respond to the points made by the Cabinet Secretary, in her letter of 18 November 2025, in relation to my petition to Senedd.

Disappointingly, the Cabinet Secretary makes a number of **false claims** about my petition; and more disappointingly, **wholly inaccurate characterisations** of the Technocamps proposal for funding.

- The Cabinet Secretary writes: *“the petition claims [the STEM Learning UK project] is an exclusively English language programme”*. **This is blatantly false**. I ask the Petitions Committee to read over my petition and confirm for itself that it makes no such claim.
- The Cabinet Secretary writes: *“The petition claims only a small proportion of funding allocated is focussed on **STEM subjects**”*. **This is blatantly false**. What the petition **accurately** notes is:

*“Astonishingly, only 7% of the Curriculum support funding goes to the **Science and Technology AoLE** [Area of Learning and Experience]; the remaining **93% goes to [support] the 5 other AoLEs**. Providing so little support for the Science and Technology AoLE – and particularly computing and digital technology – is frightening and inexplicable”*.

I ask the Petitions Committee to read over my petition and confirm for itself that the Cabinet Secretary has overtly misrepresented what it says (in expanding the claim from referring specifically to just the **Science and Technology AoLE** to all of STEM).

Given the disregard for accuracy that the Cabinet Secretary exhibits with respect to the published content of my petition, I now turn my attention to the misrepresentation and inaccuracy in which the Cabinet Secretary characterises the unpublished Technocamps proposal for funding.

**Note:** I want to make absolutely clear what my petition calls for. Technocamps has been funded, annually, by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) since 2014, but this DfES funding has now ceased. My petition calls on the Welsh Government to *“continue funding Technocamps to provide the support that schools and teachers across Wales rely on”*. The aim of my petition is **not** to have the Welsh Government reverse its decision to fund the STEM Learning project and instead fund the Technocamps project. However, to argue my case requires exposing the absurdity of the decision to award the Curriculum for Wales Grant Support Funding to STEM Learning rather than Technocamps, and the impact that this decision will have to the serious detriment of practitioners across Wales – highlighted by the sheer volume and comments of teachers backing this petition.

Ideally, the Petitions Committee would have access to the Technocamps proposal, as well as the STEM Learning proposal for the purposes of comparison, which sadly are not published for viewing by stakeholders. I have submitted a *Freedom of Information* request to the Welsh Government to be provided with the STEM Learning proposal, along with a breakdown of how their funding will be spent, in order to compare its outputs and expenditures with those of the Technocamps proposal. Unfortunately, this request remains unfulfilled.

The remainder of this document will: reflect on the content of the Technocamps proposal; demonstrate how this is misrepresented by the Cabinet Secretary; and conjecture that the STEM Learning proposal represents a far worse offering than the Technocamps proposal, providing extremely poor value-for-money, and will lead to a serious deterioration of opportunities for practitioners, particularly in remote regions of the country.

The Cabinet Secretary makes the point that the “*Curriculum for Wales Grant [Support] Programme*” focuses on **professional learning opportunities for practitioners**, which I fully acknowledge, and note **is at the heart of the national Technocamps initiative**. However, she then claims that the Technocamps proposal fails on this point, which is an incredible conclusion given the enormous evidence in the Proposal to the contrary. As I will show, the details provided in the Technocamps Proposal make it **very clear that the Technocamps proposal is, undeniably, focussed on professional learning opportunities for practitioners**; and that it represents an **extremely cost-effective** means to deliver **meaningful and effective professional learning opportunities** which are needed and in demand by practitioners across Wales.

According to the Technocamps proposal, the funding applied for was for the **salary of 15 people** working at six universities across Wales, **including 11 Computer Science education professionals**, who would develop **bilingual training resources for five new modules each year** to be **uploaded on Hwb**; and crucially **deliver this material in person** to **900 teachers** through **2600 hours of training every year**, with a clear focus on **equity of provision** across all schools and regions across Wales. The Proposal includes a detailed budget which accounts for every penny spent on directly incurred costs.

In stark contrast, for slightly *more* money, according to all that is evident in the minimal published details, the STEM Learning proposal will seemingly only employ **two people** to develop and deliver curriculum support, all on-line apart from “*face-to-face sessions in priority areas or where hands-on learning is most effective*”. I would argue that the “*priority areas*” encompass the whole of Wales, but at the very least the most remote and isolated regions; I worry and suspect though that, given the lack of manpower employed by the STEM Learning project, the interpretation will be, at best, “*wherever is easiest to get to in order to demonstrate high engagement*”.

Immediately, I cannot see reason in choosing to fund a project to employ two people to provide professional learning opportunities predominantly through unspecified online resourcing instead of a cheaper project employing 15 people with extensive experience of practitioner training within the Welsh curriculum to provide professional learning opportunities directly, reaching 900 teachers across all regions of Wales through 2600 hours of bespoke in-person training each year.

The Cabinet Secretary makes the claim in her letter that STEM Learning UK is a not-for-profit company. Whatever this means formally, I invite the Petition Committee to reflect on the latest Financial Report filed by STEM Learning UK with Companies House which records a **net profit of £3.63 million for the year ending July 2024**. Given the lack of investment in staff to work on this project, I cannot help but wonder how much of the Welsh funding will add to their future recorded net profits. Technocamps, in contrast, is not a company in any sense, it is simply a term referring to a collaboration between all the universities in Wales; each penny of its funding is accounted for.

The Cabinet Secretary notes that “*STEM Learning UK has worked with partners in Wales for more than a decade*”. I know this to be true, as Technocamps has long supported *See Science* on very many occasions to recruit and train individuals across Wales onto STEM Learning’s Ambassador programme. I have nothing but praise for the STEM Ambassador programme, which encourages individuals to offer their time and resources – on a strictly voluntarily basis at no cost to STEM Learning UK or *See Science*. However, **voluntary STEM Ambassadors** offering occasional visits to schools as part of their company’s corporate social responsibility agenda **does not represent the basis of a national programme for professional learning opportunities for practitioners**.

The Cabinet Secretary notes that the STEM Learning programme “*comprises of 20 new professional learning courses*”. However, the examples that she lists are **pre-existing courses** that currently appear on the STEM Learning website, and that Technocamps has promoted to schools and teachers as options to consider exploring (though there is **little evidence** that any practitioners have taken up STEM Learning offerings due to its on-line nature). Technocamps offers very popular practitioner training on all of the same topics, and many others, including fully accredited extended courses. Technocamps also freely provides all of the resources for these on Hwb, the Welsh Government’s learning portal used by all schools and practitioners in Wales; there is **no evidence that STEM Learning will do the same with their resources**.

In support of the Technocamps model of professional learning opportunities provided by computer science experts located at all of the universities throughout Wales, the Technocamps Proposal refers to a 62-page report<sup>1</sup> published by NESTA which assessed the activities of 66 organisations that were in receipt of public funding to provide digital outreach activities in England, which gave **stark warning** regarding the motives and methodologies of such organisations. Reflecting on the availability of **easy targets**, the foreword of this report by Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho notes:

- “The gaps are more striking than the successes, amplifying existing inequalities and hierarchies rather than empowering more people.”
- “Rural areas are being left behind.”
- “Far too many girls are not engaging, and the gap in confidence between boys and girls is widening.”

The top key finding of the report is that “Regions of England other than London and the Northwest are proportionally very undersupplied for the number of young people living there”; and its top recommendation calls on organisations “to focus their work on geographical areas that are less well provided for”.

The vast majority of Wales is **at risk** of these warnings, with its sparsely populated communities distributed across a rugged geography with few fast roads, leaving very many schools and teachers isolated in terms of geography and, thus, subject support. Technocamps has won many awards for overcoming these challenges to **ensure equity** in provision, including a **UKRI STEM Inspiration Award for Outstanding Contribution to Widening Participation, Diversity and Inclusion in STEM**, and the **Informatics Europe Award for Best Practice in Education**.

The Cabinet Secretary refers to “*practitioner feedback asking for consistent, national available professional learning opportunities*”. **This is very true** – and **exactly what Technocamps has been pointing out to the Welsh Government** in its reports for its annual funding. These opportunities are **precisely what Technocamps has been providing**, with backlogs of requests that could never be fulfilled with the very basic levels of funding historically provided by the Welsh Government, leading to such feedback.

In one survey of teachers across Wales who had undertaken Technocamps professional development training (administered by an external evaluation company during 2024) of the 152 respondents, 76% rated the training as “**Excellent**” and 22% as “Good”, with 72% rating it as “**Essential**” and 25% as “Important”. Disappointingly, **84% indicated that they could identify no other organisation to which they could get support**; the 16% that could merely cited online resources such as [bbc.co.uk/teach](http://bbc.co.uk/teach) (which they learn about from Technocamps).

With minimal financial support, Technocamps has concentrated its efforts over the past ten years supporting the various projects and initiatives that were at the forefront of thinking within DfES, often involving the support of other worthwhile organisations. Every year has thrown up new examples of this.

- When the **Digital Competence Framework** was introduced in 2014, **Technocamps** targeted every secondary school with a grand ambition to deliver 3 hours of workshops in every one of them over an 18-month period, in order to embed the ethos and understanding of the Framework. By the end of the 18 months, Technocamps delivered an average of 10 hours of workshops in 97% of all Welsh secondary schools, and generated an extensive backlog of requests for further visits and support.
- When the new **Curriculum for Wales** introduced Computer Science as a full subject, **Technocamps** worked hard to ensure that all schools were able to embed the subject into their local curriculum – in particular, by providing extensive training for the teachers responsible for delivering the subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Quinlan, O. (2015), “Young Digital Makers: Surveying attitudes and opportunities for digital creativity across the UK”. NESTA.

- When new **GCSE and A-level qualifications in Digital Technology** were introduced, **Technocamps** started a massive programme of teacher training, providing extensive professional development opportunities to over 200 teachers who struggled with the transition from the existing ICT curriculum to that for the Digital Technology qualifications.
- When the **CyberFirst Wales** programme was launched, its proposal for funding (which name-checked Technocamps 12 times) noted that delivery would be based – and rely wholly – on **Technocamps**, exploiting Technocamps’ teacher network, and with delivery coordinated by the Technocamps Regional Coordinators at the various universities across Wales.
- When the Welsh Government provided their backing for the **Minecraft Education Initiative**, **Technocamps** established 5 *Minecraft Learning Centres* across the University hubs; and developed and delivered a series of 9-week Minecraft training courses for practitioners.
- When the Welsh Government encouraged schools to engage with the **BBC micro:bit NextGen** programme, **Technocamps** developed workshops which embedded the use of these devices for each of the six AoLEs of the Welsh Curriculum, and provided full-day training workshops in all regions of Wales which was attended by almost 200 practitioners.

What is clear from this, is that **Technocamps** has always offered itself as the **vehicle for delivering the initiatives proposed or promoted by the Welsh Government**, concentrating on ensuring that all schools and **all practitioners across Wales have equal access** to the professional learning opportunities that they require. Drawing on the expertise of the Welsh universities, Technocamps is always able and eager to respond in a reactive manner to develop and deliver training sessions and workshops that align with changing priorities within DfES.

The obvious question then is: ***What motivates the Cabinet Secretary to so wrongfully mis-characterise the Technocamps proposal?***

Whilst much of Technocamps professional learning opportunities is delivered outside of the classroom, there are well-understood reasons for providing practitioner training within the classroom environment. It cannot be stressed enough how much appreciation the practitioners express in receiving training in-situ, in the classroom, with the young learners involved. Importantly – though not for pedagogical reasons – practitioners are deeply troubled by the expectation that they devote their evenings and weekends undertaking essential training through on-line resources outside of class time; many simply won’t, and most that do report it being difficult and ineffective.

Pedagogically, involving the young learners in bespoke workshops tailored to provide practitioners with essential training allows the practitioners to understand and be involved in the delivery of the topics they themselves are learning. This also provides them with the confidence that the training is developed and provided in a way that translates directly into practice in the classroom.

The Technocamps Proposal notes that, in the course of training **900 teachers** each year, **30,000 young learners** will benefit by being involved in these training sessions each year. This provides **huge added value** to the programme of practitioner development, as it remains ever important to encourage young people – in particular girls – to engage with digital education. There is no end of evidence that this is important, and endless feedback from teachers noting the positive effect on the young people in their classrooms from being involved in these professional development training workshops.

The fact that 30,000 young people benefit directly in the course of providing training to their 900 teachers must **not** detract from the fact that **this activity is absolutely focused on providing professional learning opportunities to practitioners**; though these opportunities involve a great deal of direct delivery to learners, **learner delivery is not the focus**.

# Agenda Item 3.1

## P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales

This petition was submitted by Janet Paterson, having collected a total of 1,334 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We are concerned that the current services for people with epilepsy living in Wales are not providing people with the help and support they need.

Epilepsy Action recommends a caseload of no more than 250 people per Epilepsy Specialist Nurse (ESN), in order to minimise the effects of their condition and provide the best possible care. Currently no area in Wales is meeting this recommendation.

There is a lack of ESNs and waiting times to see neurologists are over 12 months in many areas.

### **Additional Information:**

Increasing the number of ESNs in all health boards across Wales would help significantly improve access to services and the support that people with epilepsy receive.

ESNs are vital team members providing care to people with epilepsy. They work alongside consultant neurologists and other healthcare professionals to provide essential advice and support during and, as importantly, in-between appointments.

ESNs are often the first point of contact for people with epilepsy who require advice or support related to their condition and their contribution is invaluable. The crucial role of epilepsy specialist nurses in caring for and supporting people with epilepsy is set out in Epilepsy Action's recent ESPENTE report <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/research/espente>

In addition to increasing the number of ESNs, all epilepsy services in Wales need more funding to ensure that people with epilepsy receive the support and care they need.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Arfon
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1240  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/01985/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair  
Petitions committee

[Petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:Petitions@senedd.wales)

09 September 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee about **Petition P-06-1240 Improve health services for people with epilepsy living in Wales.**

The Welsh Government's aim is to ensure that people of all ages affected by a neurological condition have timely and equitable access to high quality services to enable them to live their best lives. We have set out our expectations in the [Quality Statement for Neurological Conditions](#), which was co-produced with the former Neurological Conditions Implementation Group (NCIG), including the Wales Neurological Alliance, of which Epilepsy Action Cymru is a member.

Health boards and NHS trusts are responsible for implementing the quality statement, and for the delivery of services to meet the needs of their local populations. They are supported by NHS Wales Performance and Improvement and the National Clinical Strategic Network for Neurological Conditions (NSCNNC).

The NSCNNC is working with health boards to map neurological services and workforce capacity across Wales. In addition, the NSCNNC has identified epilepsy as a priority area and convened an epilepsy task and finish group to instigate a number of actions aimed at improving the management and care of people with epilepsy across Wales, supporting better outcomes and reducing inequities in service provision.

I meet twice yearly with the Wales Neurological Alliance; the next meeting is this month. Additionally, the National Clinical Lead for Neurological Conditions and my officials met with representatives from Epilepsy Action in August during which they discussed the five key actions noted by the committee, with an undertaking to consider these further with relevant policy leads and the NSCNNC.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

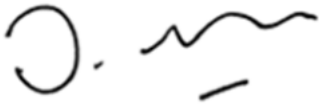
Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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[Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales)

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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

# Agenda Item 3.2

## **P-06-1428 Stop the flooding in Caenant Terrace, Skewen NOW!**

This petition was submitted by Susan Martin Kerslake, having collected a total of 776 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

For the last 40 or so years, Caenant has regularly suffered flooding because the culvert and the drainage system can't cope with the amount of water and again, the terrace has been turned into a river with thousands of gallons of water pouring down the road and back lane. One house has suffered substantial flooding in this latest breach.

### **Additional Information:**

The council have been telling us residents for years that it will be fixed, but we've now had enough and are petitioning to ensure that:

1. Neath-Port Talbot Council to agree a solution that eliminates the risk of this regular flooding occurring again; and
2. The Welsh Government ensures that funding is provided to deliver the work as soon as possible.

The drainage officer stated yesterday that the system isn't fit for purpose, and we urge all responsible bodies to take action now.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Aberavon
- South Wales West



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

Dyddiad/ Date 17 November 2025  
Rhif Ffôn/ Direct Line 01639 763309  
Ebost/ Email [leader@npt.gov.uk](mailto:leader@npt.gov.uk)  
Cyswllt/ Contact  
Eich cyf/ Your ref  
Ein cyf/ Our ref SH/SC

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair of the Petitions Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

**Sent by email only : [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)**

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS

I write further to your letter, dated 3 October 2025, requesting an update on the flood alleviation scheme in Skewen. I am able to share the following updates in regard to the proposed scheme.

A detailed design has been completed with only minor amendments to make which are being prioritised. Officers are proposing to submit the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) application to the Planning Authority next week. During the period of consultation, officers will release a media post to direct the community to the council website to have their say, as well as undertake a letter drop to residents who are likely to be affected by the works. Officers have also arranged an open afternoon/evening which is planned for 19 November at the memorial hall which will be advertised accordingly.

Once the PAC has been completed, officers will review the responses and amend elements of the works as necessary and respond to residents where appropriate. Officers carried out a similar exercise for Grandison Brook during the summer which went well and was welcomed by the community. Officers are hoping for a similar response in Skewen.

Currently, it is anticipated that a submission for full Planning will be made in February 2026 with a 12-week determination period. It is expected that drainage officers will receive a response from the Local Planning Authority by mid-May 2026.

*/Cont.....*

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Swyddfa'r Arweinydd Y Cyngor  
Steve Hunt, Arweinydd y Cyngor  
Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ  
Ffôn 01639 763309

Leader's Office  
Steve Hunt, Leader of Council  
Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ  
Phone 01639 763309

[www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)

At present officers aim to go out to construction tender in September 2026, and award in December 2026. Meaning that works would be scheduled to start in January 2027. An Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) period of six months will precede the commencement of full construction in the summer 2027.

In parallel with the above. Drainage officers will be arranging Ordinary Water Course Consent, producing construction stage drawings ready for tender, developing construction contracts, compiling works and site info, and liaising with landowners to formalise access agreements.

It should be noted that if the returned tender figure is a positive one and the Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) is above zero, then officers will look to formally apply to the Welsh Government Flood Branch for grant funding. If it is not, then officers will have further discussions with Welsh Government about the scheme as significant financial backing is required for its successful delivery given the estimated construction cost of this scheme being £16 million. This scheme represents one of the most challenging projects the council has undertaken for many years and will require significant resources for effective management and planning, as well as careful mitigation of disruption within the area.

I do hope this update is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Cyng / Cllr Steve Hunt**  
**Arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot /**  
**Leader of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**

Hello Kayleigh

Thank you for contacting me with this information, my thoughts:

The consultation meeting did not go ahead on 19 November as the council did not inform the public in time. It is now scheduled for 4 December.

Having looked at the information provided by the council I can't see how it has deviated from the original plans that have been kicking around for many years.

On Friday 28th November yet another camera survey was undertaken - I have now lost count of the number of them and I spoke to the engineer undertaking it and to quote him 'the whole system is shot', nothing new there then!

As you can see from the video I sent on the 4th November the culvert and the newly installed manhole overflowed again.

I really hope that the council listens to the residents, the work commences and that we can survive until it is completed. I won't believe it until it actually happens as we have been promised a solution since the 1970s!

Could you let me know what time the committee are meeting as I wish to remote in.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope that any pressure you can apply will facilitate a solution.

Kind regards. Sue Kerlake

## Agenda Item 3.3

### **P-06-1525 Preserve the unique character of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal for the future generations of Wales**

This petition was submitted by Jan Butler, having collected 13,847 signatures online and 169 signatures on paper, making for a total of 14,016 signatures.

#### **Text of petition:**

The Mon and Brec is one of the most picturesque and tranquil waterways in the UK winding through Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and through many rural and later urban communities as it makes its way from Brecon, through Talybont on Usk onwards through Goytre Wharf towards Newport. It provides the lifeblood to residents and communities in its path and attracts approximately 3 million visitors a year who make significant contribution to the local economy enabling these communities to thrive.

#### **Additional information:**

Since its inception by act of parliament in 1792 the canal has depended on water abstracted from the River Usk and its tributaries. The Usk at Brecon provides 80% of the water required. The water is not 'consumed' as it is returned to the river once it has travelled along the route. Until recently water abstraction did not require licences. For 200 years it has been free of charge. The canal, managed by the Canal and River Trust Wales (a charity), is now required by National Resources Wales to obtain a licence and limit water abstractions. Without a daily supply of water through its locks the canal will quickly become inoperable and closure will be inevitable. The consequences to the livelihood of our communities, natural environment and local economy are unthinkable. An unmanaged canal can lead to catastrophic failure and destruction of properties in its path. Dwr Cymru and NRW have indicated they will supply support water but at prohibitive cost which The Charity cannot afford.

#### **Senedd Constituency and Region:**

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet  
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for  
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1525  
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/01942/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

12 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding the progress of the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal's Task and Finish Group.

I am very aware of the concerns raised by businesses, residents, and communities whose livelihoods depend on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. As stated in my previous correspondence, I share your commitment to safeguarding the canal's economic, cultural, and environmental value.

Building on the investment in infrastructure we announced earlier in the summer, which is a necessary pre-requisite to any longer term water supply agreement, my officials are in active discussion with partners on addressing the ongoing cost of supplying water to the canal. The aim is to have positive progress to report at the Ministerial Group I am chairing on 17 November. In addition, work continues on further options to augment supply at other points on the canal. The work is supported by key experts from all the relevant organisations to identify both practical and lasting solutions.

Welsh Government remains fully engaged in this process and I am grateful for the positive engagement we have had from all partners.

We recognise the value of the canal to local people, nature and the economy and, particularly, the pressing nature of the situation for canal-based businesses and the wider community. I am hopeful we are now moving towards a viable solution.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales)

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.

**Back Page 154**  
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.

Thank you again for writing to me regarding this important matter. I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and lines, positioned within a light gray rectangular box.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd  
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

**P-06-1525 Preserve the unique character of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal for the future generations of Wales - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02 December 2025**

Hi, I note:

The setting up of the task and finish group is progress.

It's important that the two non navigable arms of the canal remain in the mix for consideration.

I'm pleased to see the set up of the technical group is also progress. The biggest challenge is for securing water supply to mid pound.

I also note that all stakeholders want to see security for the canal and recognise the valuable contribution to local prosperity.

There is recognition that costs will need to be shared. Uncertainty where funds will come from.

BBNP have a role to play in continuing to promote the canal and also getting the message out that the future of the canal is secure.

Businesses need certainty.

Apologies if the reply is a little curt - time constraint to respond.

Kind regards,

Jan

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair

Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee (ETRA)

25 November 2025

Dear Andrew,

**Petition P-06-1291 Hold an enquiry into the corporate takeover of the veterinary profession in Wales.**

The Petitions Committee met on 24 November and had a private discussion about the above petition, submitted by Linda Joyce-Jones. This followed an informal meeting between the Chair and petitioner on 10 November, to discuss latest developments with the Competition and Markets Authority's ongoing market investigation into [veterinary services for household pets](#).

As you are aware, the Petitions Committee has been considering this petition for some time, and following a short inquiry we submitted evidence to the CMA inquiry. The CMA's Wales representative has also been keeping us informed of developments. As agreed by the Committee last October, I also wrote to your predecessor Paul Davies MS, to request that ETRA consider an inquiry on the matter within its forward work programme.

At that time both our Committees had agreed to keep a watching brief on the petition pending the conclusion of the CMA inquiry. Paul Davies indicated that "once the CMA had reported the Committee would consider its next steps. This may include holding an inquiry if appropriate." At that time the CMA investigation was expected to conclude in May 2025, but this substantial investigation was subsequently extended into 2026. Having published its provisional findings on [15 October](#), the CMA is consulting further on its reform proposals, before issuing a final report in February-March 2026, with an administrative deadline of May 2026.

The petitioner has raised concerns with me and with the Chair of the CMA inquiry about the direction taken between the publication of their initial work and the latest Provisional Findings. She notes the British Veterinary Association is named as a "main party" in this investigation, and questions the extent to which the voice of consumers (companion animal owners) is now being drowned out by the interests of the veterinary profession and in particular the large corporates.

The petitioner understands that many aspects of this investigation are non-devolved, however she is of the view that there should be a fully independent external ombudsman for the veterinary profession in Wales, and that this regulatory role should be made a devolved matter.

I appreciate that at this point in the Senedd term, ETRA's work programme may already be fully committed until dissolution. However, as the Committee responsible for scrutiny of animal welfare, it would be appreciated if you could advise whether there is scope for you to take up this matter with the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, perhaps in the course of your general ministerial scrutiny if there is no capacity for a short inquiry. It would be useful for the petitioner to know the Welsh Government's position on the inquiry, its provisional findings and the direction of travel, and what it means for the future of veterinary services in Wales.

For your Committee's information, the petitioner is also planning an event in the Senedd in January, which I have agreed to host as Chair of the Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare.

The Petitions Committee will be reviewing all petitions that remain open at the end of this Senedd term and producing a legacy report. We expect this to be one of the significant ongoing issues to be reported on and recommended for follow-up by Members of the Seventh Senedd.

The full details of the Committee's consideration of the petition, including the correspondence and the actions agreed by the Committee can be found here:

<https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=39835>

I would be grateful if you could send any response by e-mail to the clerking team at [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales).

Yours sincerely



Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



# Agenda Item 4.2



Ymddiriedolaethau Natur  
**Cymru**  
Wildlife Trusts  
**Wales**

**This letter is sent by email only**

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

24 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

**P-06-1489 Legislate to ensure Swift bricks are installed in all new buildings in Wales**

On behalf of the alliance of individuals, organisations and community groups that supported the above petition, we write to thank you and the Petitions Committee for ensuring that this important matter was debated in the Senedd.

Whilst we were pleased to see the petition draw support from across the Siambr, we were deeply disappointed by the response from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning. We are concerned that whilst the Welsh Government acknowledges the need for urgent action on red listed species such as Swifts, it has no strategy to halt the decline in Swift nest sites or create new ones. Without these, there is a real risk that Swifts will become extinct as a breeding bird in Wales.

The thousands of supporters who signed the petition sent a clear message, and alongside them we will continue to call on the Welsh Government to take the necessary steps to ensure the simple, measurable and effective step of installing Swift bricks in all new buildings in Wales is mandated.

Thank you for your support on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Barrell  
Petitioner

Julian Hughes  
Head of Species  
RSPB Cymru

Joe Wilkins  
Policy & Advocacy Manager  
Wildlife Trusts Wales

Sarah Murphy AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Agenda Item 4.3

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-784  
Ein cyf/Our ref SM/00646/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru

petitions@senedd.wales

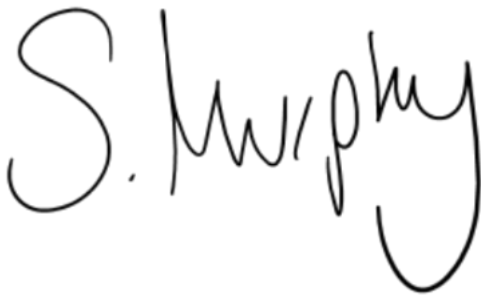
25 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October concerning Petition P-05-784 Prescription drug dependence and withdrawal – recognition and support, which requested an update on the implementation of those recommendations in the Committee's report which were accepted by the Welsh Government.

Please see the attached table of recommendations along with the updated Welsh Government response.

Yours sincerely,



**Sarah Murphy AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
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[Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales)

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.

**Petition P-05-784 about Recognition and Support iro Prescription Drug Dependence and Withdrawal**

Recommendation	Lead
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> Greater recognition should be given to prescription drug dependence at a national level in both policy and strategy, including within the next Substance Misuse Action Plan and the Substance Misuse Treatment Framework</p>	<p>Research on this issue was completed in 2019 the report can be found here <a href="#">a-qualitative-study-of-the-misuse-and-diversion-of-prescription-only-and-over-the-counter-medication.pdf</a> . Following this the report was widely disseminated and areas were asked to look at findings and where needed to ensure practice reflected the recommendations.</p> <p>The diversion and use of Prescribed only Medication remains a priority as part of the wider harm reduction work within Wales. Any individual seeking treatment for these issues will be assessed and given support to reduce the harms caused by these substances.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> The Welsh Government should confirm and explain its position on whether SSRI and SNRI antidepressants should be formally recognised as potentially leading to problems of dependence and withdrawal.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government’s position was set out in full in the Cabinet Secretary’s response to the Chair of the Petition’s Committee of May 2019.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> The Welsh Government should restate and emphasise antidepressants should not be routinely prescribed for mild depression in guidance to healthcare professionals, and should provide assurances that sufficient alternative treatment options, such as psychological therapies, are available across Wales.</p>	<p>All clinicians in Wales who treat depression are expected to do so in accordance with evidence based guidelines.</p> <p>In June 2022, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published guidance entitled <a href="#">Depression in adults: treatment and management</a>, which sets out the range of treatment options available for people with depression including psychological and psychosocial interventions.</p> <p>We continue to invest in prevention and early intervention support, funding a</p>

	<p>number of services. These include providing free online cognitive behavioural therapy (Silvercloud) designed to help people with mild to moderate anxiety, depression or stress which is available to everyone residing in Wales, providing access to Reading Well a prescription reading service, and the CALL Mental Health Helpline for Wales.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> The Welsh Government should ensure that additional guidance is produced and promoted in relation to safe tapering of prescription medications, both for patients and health professionals.</p>	<p>The NICE guidance published in June 2022 includes specific advice for healthcare professionals on stopping antidepressant medication. In addition, all healthcare professionals working in NHS Wales have access to resources to support deprescribing including access to the Maudsley’s deprescribing guidelines entitled Safe Deprescribing of Antidepressants.</p> <p>A range of resources are available for people taking medicines for mental health, through the website <a href="#">Choice and Medication for NHS Wales</a>. These include patient information leaflets and handy fact sheets covering a range of topics including <a href="#">stopping or coming off antidepressants</a>.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> The Welsh Government should provide an update on the actions carried out in response to Recommendation 8 of the Health and Social Care Committee’s inquiry into Alcohol and Substance Misuse published in August 2015.</p>	<p>The Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22 identified tackling dependence on prescription only medicines (POM) and over the counter medicines (OTC ) as a key priority . Our policy in Wales is to take an evidence based approach to the prescribing and administration of all medicines. In order to provide assurance that organisations adhere to this evidence based approach we routinely measure performance in key areas through national prescribing indicators, including a number relating to opioids use. The Welsh Government also recognises it is important we</p>

	distinguish between substance misuse, as the harmful use of substances such as drugs and alcohol; and dependence arising from the therapeutic use of medicines whether they are prescribed or purchased.
<b>Recommendation 6.</b> The Welsh Government should determine whether SSRI and SNRI antidepressants should be added to the list of drugs targeted for reduction, and should introduce a national prescribing indicator to support closer monitoring of prescribing volumes and patterns across Wales. This indicator should be used to identify areas where further investigation or intervention may be required.	The Welsh Government determined it would not be appropriate to introduce a prescribing indicator for SSRI and SNRI antidepressants. The rationale for this was set out in the Welsh Government's response of May 2019.
<b>Recommendation 7.</b> The Welsh Government should investigate, as a priority, the potential for a national rollout of a service based upon the Prescribed Medication Support Service operating within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, in order to ensure that specific advice and support is available for people who require assistance with prescription medication.	<p>We continue to believe Primary care should be the first point of access, with the patient's GP ensuring appropriate prescribing, consistent monitoring and support for safe tapering, and titration of the medication where necessary. In addition, drug treatment services should provide support where necessary. As part of their needs assessments, Area Planning Boards should ensure this topic is covered and that services are engaging with GP practices to address this issue.</p> <p>Clinical pharmacists working in general practice as part of a multi-disciplinary team have a vital role to play in providing specialist expertise in medicines use while helping to address both the public health and social care needs of a patient at the practice</p>
<b>Recommendation 8.</b> The Welsh Government should create opportunities for a coordinated strategy and greater information-sharing between health boards in relation to prescribed drug	The All Wales Medicines Strategy Group published updated educational resources for healthcare professionals to support the appropriate prescribing of

dependence, with a view to improved sharing of best practice and to ensure equity of services and support to patients.

anxiolytic and hypnotic medicines in June 2021.

AWTTC published an updated educational pack to support [appropriate prescribing of hypnotics and anxiolytics](#) in July 2021 and work is currently underway to produce resources to support the appropriate prescribing of gabapentinoids.

The All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC) also facilitate regular online learning at lunch events and an annual best practice day, which enable the sharing of best practice between health boards and clinicians.

**Recommendation 9.** NHS Wales should make better use of the expertise of pharmacists to support evidence-based prescribing, patient monitoring including regular patient reviews, and increased provision of help with tapering and withdrawing from medication.

The Welsh Government's investment in primary care has resulted in a significant increase in the number of pharmacists working directly with GP practices to improve the quality of prescribing in a range of areas. As well as taking responsibility for providing care directly, these pharmacists are supporting GPs and other prescribers to improve the quality of prescribing through activities such as therapeutic monitoring and medication review. The number of pharmacists directly employed by GP practices in Wales was 208 in March 2025 an increase of 82.5% on March 2020.

The Welsh Government is aware the roles undertaken by pharmacists, and increasingly pharmacy technicians, working in general practice can vary. In response, the Welsh Government recently commissioned the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to undertake an independent review into the role of pharmacy professionals working within

	<p>general practice, which will be completed by spring 2026.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b> The Welsh Government should conduct and publish an assessment of the sufficiency of the advice available to people experiencing prescription drug dependence and withdrawal through the DAN24/7 helpline, including the adequacy of training for operators. The Welsh Government should ensure that the availability of advice related to prescribed drug dependence is promoted appropriately.</p>	<p>We continue to work with DAN 24/7 to ensure information is relevant and up to date. The DAN 24/7 website has also been upgraded to be digitally optimised for ease of accessibility and use via a mobile device.</p> <p>DAN 24/7 ensures that POMs are covered in the training and awareness operatives have, and this will continue to be evaluated to ensure further training is provided if necessary.</p> <p>DAN 24/7 provides a single point of contact for anyone in Wales wanting further information or help relating to drugs or alcohol, and the content of the website reflects current trends including prescription only medicines. The website provides details on specific drugs such as pregabalin and diazepam, alongside the provision of leaflets on prescription drugs.</p>

# Agenda Item 6

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