

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 (Senedd)

Meeting date: 19 January 2026

Meeting time: 13.30

For further information contact:

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Committee Clerk

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Pre-meeting

(13:00–13:30)

Public meeting

(13:30–16:00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(13:30)

2 Access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food: evidence session one

(13:30–14:30)

(Pages 1 – 17)

Pearl Costello, Food Sense Wales

Hannah Gibbs, Sustain

Chloe Masefield, Bwyd Powys (hosted by Cultivate)

Chris Nottingham, Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership/Tai Calon Housing Association

Break

(14:30–14:45)



3 Access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food: evidence session two

(14:45–16:00)

(To Follow)

Janet Hayward, Big Bocs Bwyd

Sarah Germain, Farshare Cymru

Katie Till, Trussell Trust

Robbie Davison, Can Cook – Well Fed

Simon Wright, Cegin y Bobl & Wright's Food Emporium

4 Papers to note

(16:00)

4.1 Correspondence from the Future Generations Commissioner to the Chair regarding the Future Generations Commissioner's stakeholder survey

(Pages 18 – 19)

4.2 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill

(Pages 20 – 24)

4.3 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding the Committee's report: "Anything's Achievable with the Right Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap"

(Pages 25 – 26)

4.4 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

(Pages 27 – 31)

4.5 Correspondence from Dr Rob Jones of the Wales Governance Centre to the Chair regarding the Criminal Justice System in Wales

(Pages 32 – 34)

4.6 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution

Committee regarding the Four Nations Inter-Ministerial Group on Work and Pensions

(Page 35)

4.7 Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip to the Chair regarding welcome tickets for asylum seekers in Wales

(Pages 36 – 38)

4.8 Correspondence from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding the most recent meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee

(Page 39)

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of today's meeting

(16:00)

Private meeting

(16:00 – 16:20)

6 Access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food: consideration of the evidence

(16:00–16:15)

7 British Sign Language (Wales) Bill: order of consideration

(16:15–16:20)

(Page 40)

Document is Restricted

Food Sense Wales response to the ESJ Inquiry into access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food

In support of the Oral Evidence session 19th January 2025.

This evidence focuses on:

1. Setting the context of the challenges of household food security within the wider context of the food system
2. Progress made to support the provision of healthy and nutritious food, balancing the need for emergency support with the more structural changes required
3. What more can Welsh Government do support access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food for all?

About Food Sense Wales

Founded in 2018, **Food Sense Wales** was established to drive forward a cross-sector approach to the food system in Wales. We work with communities, organisations, policymakers and Government across Wales to create a food and farming system that is good for people and good for the planet.

Food Sense Wales understands the sustainability challenges across the food system and works on multiple levels to co-create a food system that is good for people and the planet. Its strategy is based around three key pillars:

- 1. Building a positive food culture in Wales that invests in people, embraces our heritage, celebrates and values “the local” and puts food education front and centre**
- 2. Catalysing a revolution in local and sustainable procurement inspired through horticulture: healthy and sustainable food on the public plate should catalyse demand for the same on every plate in Wales**
- 3. Co-creating a food policy and legislative framework that enables, sets targets for and monitors the transition of agroecological production and consumption in Wales to benefit the environment and society**

Food Sense Wales aims to achieve these goals through:

- **Developing a network of cross sector food partnerships across Wales that meet local needs in order to achieve national change**
- **Piloting and scaling innovative approaches to inspire action with initiatives such as Welsh Veg in Schools**
- **Advocating for and developing good food policy building consensus with food related organisations operating in Wales and beyond through Food Policy Alliance Cymru**
- **Telling the stories of the experiences, achievements and challenges within the food system through effective communications**

1. Setting the context of the challenges of household food security within the wider context of the food system

It is important to highlight that household food security is dependent upon affordability and availability of a healthy diet and has local, national and global dimensions:

- Do households have sufficient incomes (through fair work and/or welfare support) to afford the cost of a healthy diet?
- Is the cost of a healthy diet affordable?
- Is a healthy diet easily accessible?

There are stark warnings about the state of our global food system due to geopolitical factors and the impacts of climate change. See the [National Emergency Briefing](#) and [Just in Case: 7 steps to narrow the UK civil food resilience gap - National Preparedness Commission](#).

In the short to medium term, availability of some foods may be impacted through these factors. However, the significant impact being felt now is the increase in the cost of food. Between January 2020 and July 2025, food and non-alcoholic drink prices rose 37%, compared with 28% for overall UK inflation according to the [Food and Drink Federation](#). The gap between rising food costs and wage growth has placed a disproportionate burden on low-income families. There is a stark disparity in the proportion of disposable income that different income groups must spend to afford the Eatwell Guide, with the least deprived fifth of households only needing to spend 11% vs the most deprived fifth needing to spend 45% of their disposable income (after housing costs) according to the [Food Foundations 2025 Broken Plate report](#).

1.2 Eating sustainably costs even more

Additional costs are incurred for those wanting to eat organically produced food; food which is free from synthetic pesticides, supports nature, reduces Carbon emissions and supports local economies. [Bridging the Gap](#) has drawn on nine pilots across the UK (including [Welsh Veg in Schools](#) and [Cardiff Planet Card](#)) to show that connecting organic, sustainably grown produce from small and medium-sized farms with low-income households can generate £8.78 in social value for every £1 of public investment, matched with £1.10 from shoppers. The return includes £3.11 in better health, £3.94 in stronger communities, £1.44 in local economic growth and 29p in climate and nature benefits. Hannah Gibbs from Sustain who leads the Bridging the Gap will be providing oral evidence to this inquiry.

1.3 Access isn't equal

Food insecurity does not impact all groups equally with certain communities facing disproportionate risk. For example, in June 2024 households with someone limited a lot by disability were more than three times as likely to experience food insecurity as households with no disabilities. [Food Insecurity Tracking | Food Foundation](#).

Supported through funding from WG Social Justice team, Local Food Partnerships took part in a workshop "[Understanding Equality in Food Systems: Applying Inclusive Practices](#)" which included an: exploration of expanding views of diversity, using our position to effect change, recognising the impact of bias, understanding communities and diverse lived experiences and barriers to participation. Food Partnerships are using these insights to shape their work, a good example can be found on the Bwyd Abertawe case study in the [Status of Local Food Partnerships](#) (page 31).

2. Progress made to support the provision of healthy and nutritious food, balancing the need for emergency support with the more structural changes needed

Welsh Government has made efforts to support cash first approaches and to help optimize household income through the Child Poverty Strategy. Many Food Partnerships

are taking these approaches and applying the principles of [Cash First](#) advocated for by the Independent Food Aid Network. See the [Food Cardiff Gold Award](#) (page 23) for a case study on maximising household income.

2.1 Community Food Strategy and Local Food Partnerships

Welsh Government has recognised the need to build greater resilience in our food system, through the publication of the [Community Food Strategy](#), which does seek to build more local and diverse food systems in Wales, predominantly through the network of cross sector Local Food Partnerships. This work has built on the [Sustainable Food Places](#) approach which Food Sense Wales has been leading on since 2019 in Wales. It has been demonstrated to be an effective leadership mechanism for local food systems [The value of local food partnerships: Covid and beyond](#).

Cross Government funding for these partnerships (Social Justice and Food Division) demonstrates the dual recognition to build more resilience in local supply chains (production and supply) – in order to make more nature and climate friendly food available; and in community approaches such as community meals, optimizing uptake of benefits, community growing, building networks around emergency food provision and training – for example through the [Nutrition Skills for Life®](#) programme.

Welsh Government's investment in local food partnerships has been a direct recognition of the need to shift the balance from majority emergency food aid to a more preventative, sustainable approach. Between 2019 to 2024 there has been £26.5million allocated to tackling food poverty ([Written Statement: Funding for Tackling Food Poverty \(17 December 2024\) | GOV.WALES](#)) which includes Direct Food Support / Emergency Food Aid funding, funding for Fareshare Cymru and funding for Local Food Partnerships.

Continuing to provide emergency food aid funding, whilst investing in structural approaches to change through the Local Food Partnerships is positive. Currently there is still a need for emergency food aid for people in crisis but more needs to be done to create a sustainable system. It would be worth reviewing how much money for emergency food aid is spent by Welsh Government to the benefit of large retail. Could schemes that promote spend in local food economies provide the dual benefit of supporting those on low incomes whilst building local resilient economies? See [Cardiff Planet Card](#) as one example of how this could be imagined. It is also worth referring to the [Local Food Plan](#) which is looking to grow the local food sector by 10 times by 2030.

Examples of all projects WG is currently supporting Food Partnerships with, can be found here: [Summary of LFP Grants.docx](#). This includes small grants and 2 collaborative grants – one across Dyfed-Powys and one across North Wales.

The Status of Local Food Partnership 2025 report can be found here [PartnershipsReportENG.pdf](#) – this report will be updated in March 2026.

With further information and video case studies of Food Partnerships here [Local Food Partnerships - foodsensewales.org.uk](#)

Specifically the committee will hear oral evidence from:

Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership which was established after the previous Blaenau Gwent PSB (now Blaenau Gwent Local Well-Being Partnership) agreed to implement a well-being programme on sustainable food and food insecurity. Particularly notable is their coordinated and strategic approach to tackling food poverty including multi-agency working to increase Healthy Start scheme uptake, with frontline staff training, a local retailer booster top-up voucher trial, vitamin collections at community hubs and a local media campaign.

[Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership: Healthy Food For All - foodsensewales.org.uk](#)

Bwyd Powys Food is working with the Council health protection team and local growers to support families at two Flying Start settings to access local, sustainable, and healthy food. The pilot provides weekly subsidised veg boxes from local farms, free monthly cooking classes and shared meals.

[Bwyd Powys Food: Food for the Planet - foodsensewales.org.uk](#)

And written evidence (Appendix 1) from:

Food Cardiff - Planet Card is a pilot scheme in Cardiff to increase access to planet-friendly food to households on low-incomes. Participants receive £11 per week to spend on organic fruit & veg at Cardiff Farmers Markets (a social enterprise). Initial findings from Cardiff University's independent evaluation have shown increases in healthy eating behaviours and reports of reduced social isolation amongst participants; with the financial investment directly benefiting small Welsh growers. Written evidence from a Food Cardiff member and participant on the scheme is in Appendix 1.

[Food Cardiff: Good Food Governance and Strategy - foodsensewales.org.uk](#)

In addition the committee may like to note that Food Sense Wales and the School of Geography & Planning, Cardiff University, recently published "[Food and Housing Connections: strengthening communities through good food](#)". The report summarises the outcomes from an event bringing together three communities of experts: Practitioners in social housing, Local Food Partnerships, and specialist researchers in

food system transformation and housing. One of the case studies is Down to Zero, a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society who are working with Cynon Taf (a community housing group) and **RCT Food Partnership**. Cynon Taf tenants volunteer at sites that operate according to permaculture and no-dig principles. The resulting produce supplies the Llysh Bocs subscription veg box delivery, which aims to become a self-financing social enterprise supplying locally grown produce produced by its employees. One of the report recommendations was for housing associations to partner with tenants and health teams to create cooperative food models that utilise Housing Associations and tenants' purchasing power, reduce food insecurity, and support local supply chains.

2.2 Universal Primary Free School Meals

Welsh Governments roll out of Universal Primary Free School Meals has the potential to support households in a significant way, but the programme must understand why uptake of these meals is lower than desired and particularly by children from low income households. (see section 3). There is also a need to extend provision to secondary school children.

2.3 Food and Fun

Welsh Government has continued to invest in its Programme for Government commitment for holiday provision through the ['Food and Fun' School Holiday Enrichment Programme](#) administered through the WLGA. This programme (originally piloted through the Food Cardiff partnership in 2015) has become a vital part of the support infrastructure for families and schools. It's a place where assets such as [Nutrition Skills for Life®](#) training, Local Food Partnerships and local initiatives feed off one another to create something that is more than the sum of its parts. For example, Welsh Veg in Schools began as a pilot within Cardiff's Food and Fun, and staff trained in Nutrition Skills for Life for Food and Fun use these skills within term time.

In 2025 Julie Morgan MS conducted a review of the programme and stated that *"I have confidence that the Programme is so valuable that there should be a systematic way found to ensure that availability is extended in low take up areas, so to avoid a 'postcode lottery'.* The recommendations made focused on ensuring provision be maximised to ensure they are reaching those children and young people who need it most, whilst also recognising the Welsh Government need to give further consideration to what wider provision is needed to support families over the holiday periods [School Holiday Enrichment Programme \(SHEP\): interim report \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

2.4 Welsh Veg in Schools – Welsh Government Foundational Economy

There has been a recognition that Wales is highly dependent on imports of fruit and vegetables and there has been a drive to increase organic horticulture through initiatives such as [Welsh Veg in Schools](#) (part funded through WG Foundational Economy in 23/4- 24/5 and 25/6). This provides the potential for all children who take free school meals to have free access to locally and sustainably grown vegetables and for a larger market to be developed for the public and commercial sectors. But it requires significant investment in support for Horticulture (training, resources, market development) and infrastructure (on farm, centrally and in schools) and building relationships across the supply chain – if it is to build the kind of Food Security that is needed for the future. Securing that funding, especially through efforts with Welsh Governments Integrated Natural Resources funding, has been extremely challenging. This year the pilot will have grown around 30T of organic produce supplying into selected schools across 13 Local Authorities and has built huge momentum – one example – [Local veg takes the lead on Ceredigion School menus - Ceredigion County Council](#).

In order for children to embrace vegetable consumption, we need a radical and long-term approach to food in school that ensures all children have access to the resources, knowledge and experiences to learn about food, to learn through food and to share good food throughout their entire learning journey. See the [Tonnes of Change](#) report for more detailed information.

It's worth noting that Welsh Government has supported Veg Powers [Eat Them To Defeat Them](#) campaign for a number of years (2019/2020–2024/5) in order to support bilingual delivery. The [evaluation](#) confirms that repeated involvement in the campaign leads to increased veg consumption over the long term and population scale improvement. Unfortunately, Welsh Government was unable to support the campaign in Wales for the 25/6 financial year.

3 What more can Welsh Government do support access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food for all?

3.1 Food across Welsh Government remains fragmented

Despite the publication of Food Matters which mapped food initiatives across government departments with the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, current government efforts to address the multiple challenges of the food system remain fragmented across multiple policy areas. To address these interconnected

issues, we believe **a robust governance framework for food policy is essential** to fully address food security.

3.2 Focus on Food from Wellbeing of Future Generations commissioner

(see separate evidence submitted by WFGC)

Whilst the focus on Food from the WFGC is very welcome, it should also be noted that there is a need to amend the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG Act) to include the food system in the definitions of Wales' Well-being goals - with access to healthy, climate and nature friendly diets for all.

In November 2025, Food Sense Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales published guidance for [local authorities in Wales on food](#). The guidance outlines the food policy levers which local authorities control or influence and provides examples from across Wales and the UK on how local authorities can use these levers to improve local food systems. The guidance outlines advice on governance, planning, procurement, access to food, promoting healthy diets and food waste and provides strategic links with the Child Poverty Strategy, Healthy Weight Healthy Wales and the Community Food strategy. But it requires local government leaders to take up the advice.

3.3 Food needs to be at the heart of the next Programme for Government

Food Sense Wales is part of [Food Policy Alliance Cymru](#) which recently published their Asks of the next Welsh Government calling on them to put food at the heart of its Programme for Government by prioritising equal access to local, affordable, healthy, delicious, nature and climate friendly diets by:

- Developing a comprehensive Food Resilience Plan that delivers on Wales' Well-being Goals
- Ensuring every child leaves school Food Literate
- Building Community Food Wealth
- Creating an ambitious Growth Plan for Edible Horticulture

[Put Food at the heart of Welsh-Government](#) contains a bank of recommendations and initiatives the committee may want to refer to as part of this evidence as well as list of helpful references.

Katie Palmer, Head of Food Sense Wales
9th January 2025

Appendix 1

Evidence from Planet Card participant and (community) Food Cardiff member

Shopping Experience

“Planet Card has given me a great opportunity to be part of Cardiff Farmers’ markets. I want to eat food that is good for me and good for the planet and my Planet Card means I can afford to do that. I enjoy coming to the market on Saturdays or Sundays.

I am lucky I can cycle, and with all the investment in safer cycling lanes its quite easy for everyone to cycle or get the bus to the Riverside Farmers’ Market. This means that my shopping experience is climate friendly too.

Produce Quality

The vegetables and fruit that I buy at the farmers markets are so much nicer than anything bought in supermarkets. They are so tasty and not covered in nasty plastic. They taste of the goodness of the earth or the trees where they are grown. A plastic packet of washed carrots I would boil in water and then eat. They would taste bland and even a bit chemical. But carrots from Paul’s stall I treat differently, with more care. I may roast them, air fry them or make them into the centre piece of a meal, the star of the show rather than a bland side dish. The same goes with his sweetcorn, courgettes or peppers. I really enjoy fresh salads using ingredients I’ve bought with my Planet Card. This is helping me to maintain much healthier eating habits.

Changing attitudes and embracing new opportunities

I don’t have much time for growing my own food at the moment but when Paul has had plants on the stall I have bought them. My basil plants grew on my windowsill and had a nice smell. They made me want to look for new recipes so I could use them. I also had a courgette plant but that I had to put in a bigger pot outside which worked. I made some delicious ratatouille with the courgettes and added a tin of red kidney beans to make it healthier. Using my Planet Card means I am eating fruit and vegetables that are inseason here in Wales not food shipped in from across the world. It was a bit sad when the strawberry season ended as they tasted amazing and I loved sharing them with family and friends.

If everyone in my community could have a Planet card I think they would enjoy it too. We could all get used to eating locally grown yummy food and maybe learn more about how this is good for our planet.

Fitting in with One Planet Cardiff and local Food Strategies

Proud to be a new Gold Award Sustainable Food Place

Planet card bridges the gap between what people on low incomes want to eat and what they can afford to eat.

Planet card is supporting all the way along the food chain, better sustainable local agriculture, better local retail opportunities leading to better diets and health outcomes”

[Cardiff Planet Card](#)

Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee Inquiry into access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food: Submission of evidence from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
05/01/26

This evidence focusses on 1) improving food governance in Wales to promote access to food 2) national policy recommendations to improve access to food and 3) recommendations for local authorities on access to food.

1. Food governance in Wales – promoting access to food through a national food resilience plan and integrating access to food into the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The current context of food governance in the UK and Wales

Access to affordable, healthy and sustainable food is rapidly rising up the policy agenda across the UK government, devolved and local governments. The UK Government has established a food strategy, the Scottish Government has created the Good Food Nation Act and the Northern Ireland Executive has published its food strategy framework. A growing number of local authorities across the UK are setting their own food strategies.

These strategies or strategic approaches aim to address a set of common challenges – rising food insecurity, growing diet related ill-health and the need to improve food resilience – and outline the need for a cross departmental approach to food and strategic vision for food policy across UK, devolved and local government.

Welsh Government has made important progress towards addressing Wales' food challenges, in particular:

- The roll out of universal free school meals for primary schools.
- Establishing the Community Food Strategy – with two important commitments amongst its six objectives 1) year on year growth of horticulture in Wales and 2) support for Local Food Partnerships in every local authority area in Wales.
- Setting out the Food Matters document framed by the Well-being of Future Generations Act and which outlines the policy levers on food at devolved level and relevant Welsh Government programmes across food.

The [Future Generations Report 2025](#) outlines that without access to local, healthy and sustainable food – Wales cannot achieve the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

However, access to food is largely missing from the architecture of the Well-being of Future Generations Act – and a result is largely missing from the well-being duties across the public sector. Food is missing from the definitions of Wales' seven well-being goals and is only partially measured in Wales' 50 national well-being indicators through two broad sub-indicators on healthy lifestyles.

Access to food is largely missing from the well-being objectives which public bodies are required to set and meet through their well-being duties. In 2024, only eight local authorities

and only two health boards had integrated food into their well-being objectives and only two health boards. Despite these food gaps in individual public body well-being objectives, in 2025 encouragingly a growing number of Public Services Board are prioritising food as a collective focus.

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has outlined recommendations for Welsh Government on food governance in Wales:

Build on the Community Food Strategy and establish a national food resilience plan for Wales. This plan should set a strategic vision and direction of travel for food policy in Wales and set out cross-departmental policy actions to work towards improving Wales' food resilience. The plan should ensure that access to food for current and future generations is integrated across Welsh government policy – ensuring a coherent approach across Ministerial portfolios.

Integrate food into the Well-being of Future Generations Act to complement a national food resilience plan and ensure that access to affordable, local, healthy and sustainable food is integrated into the well-being duties of the Welsh Government and wider public sector.

2. National policies to increase access to food

Welsh Government should expand Free School Meals to all children up to age 16, ensuring every child in Wales, including children from households with no recourse to public funds, have access to healthy and sustainable food at school.

Welsh Government's universal free school meals for primary school children is a crucial step in tackling hunger, improving behaviour and academic performance, and reducing stigma. However, means-tested free school meals in secondary schools leaves many children hungry and at a time when daily fruit and vegetable intake among young people in Wales is [declining](#). The [Bevan Foundation](#) has reported on the number of children from households with no recourse to public funds missing out on free school meals in Wales.

Welsh Government should scale up the Nutrition Skills for Life programme across all schools in Wales, ensuring that every child leaves school food literate, with the skills and knowledge to maintain a healthy and sustainable diet.

To equip future generations with the skills for lifelong healthy eating, Wales should expand food literacy programmes like [Nutrition Skills for Life](#), which teaches children the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed to plan and prepare nutritious meals. Norway offers a strong example, where nutrition education is embedded in the national curriculum through a dedicated "Food and Health" subject, alongside national guidelines for school food provision, including vending machines.

Welsh Government and local authorities should ensure all free school meals contain at least two portions of locally and sustainably produced seasonal vegetables. Local authorities should join the Welsh Veg in Schools programme to build resilient local horticulture supply chains.

In 2023, 94% of vegetables served in Welsh schools were imported and none were organic. The Welsh Veg in Schools initiative is changing that by increasing the supply of locally produced organic vegetables in school meals. In 2025 the project is working with thirteen local

authorities, fifteen growers, four wholesalers, Farming Connect Horticulture and Local Food Partnerships. By buying organic local vegetables for primary school meals, local economy and horticultural production are boosted while providing healthy food for school children with a provenance story that encourages uptake. Producing sustainably contributes to biodiversity gain and carbon reduction.

Welsh Government, local authorities and health boards should collaborate to introduce a Welsh fresh fruit and vegetable voucher scheme for low-income households, helping families afford nutritious food while supporting local food growers.

Initiatives like [Cardiff's Planet Card](#) show how targeted support can help families afford fresh fruit and vegetables. Inspired by the [Alexander Rose](#) fruit and vegetables voucher scheme, which has increased fruit and veg intake by three portions a day for participating households, similar programmes could be expanded across Wales to reach communities most in need while supporting local growers.

All public bodies should reduce or eliminate the junk foods and ultra-processed foods (UPFs) sold on their premises and from the meals they provide, such as in schools, hospitals and care homes. Public bodies should ban the advertising and promotion of junk foods and UPFs from all publicly owned advertising and marketing spaces.

Public bodies can also improve diets by restricting the advertising and promotion of unhealthy foods, which are linked to rising obesity and diet-related diseases. Modelling of Transport for London's [healthier food advertising policy](#) suggests a 20% decrease in sugary product purchases.

Welsh Government should maintain its commitment to long term funding for Local Food Partnerships.

Local Food Partnerships bring together partners from a range of different sectors to address social, economic and environmental issues, working together to ensure good food for all. They work across sectors and bring people together to develop a vision for a more sustainable food future, tailored to the local area and responding to local needs. There is now a Local Food Partnership for every local authority area in Wales and they are playing an increasingly important role in shaping local authority and Public Services Boards' approaches to food as outlined in this [report](#) from Food Sense Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

3. Local Authorities and access to food

In November 2025, Food Sense Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales published guidance for [local authorities in Wales on food](#). The guidance outlines the food policy levers which local authorities control or influence and provides examples from across Wales and the UK on how local authorities can use these levers to improve local food systems. The guidance outlines advice on governance, planning, procurement, access to food, promoting healthy diets and food waste.

Local authorities in Wales and access to food – the guidance outlines the following advice to embed access to affordable, nutritious, and sustainable food within wider poverty strategies, rather than treating it as a stand-alone issue. Local authority-enabled food provision has a significant role in reducing health inequalities and household food insecurity. Significant inequalities exist in household food security, for example disabled people, households with more than two children and people from non-white ethnic groups are at higher risk of food insecurity. **Local authorities should:**

- **Become an accredited real living wage employer:** Cardiff, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Monmouthshire and Vale of Glamorgan local authorities are accredited.
- **Set out statutory entitlements clearly, ensuring residents know what they are entitled to and how to access it, and communicate support effectively:** [Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf](#) councils have produced cash-first leaflets with the Independent Food Aid Network.
- **Prioritise “cash-first” approaches and income-focused interventions, alongside advice and support to maximise income and build financial resilience.** A "cash first" approach is a strategy for tackling poverty and food insecurity that prioritizes giving people direct cash payments, rather than in-kind support like food parcels. [Shropshire Council](#) is taking a long-term, preventative approach to food insecurity through reframing food insecurity to reduce stigma, integrating it into organisational plans, delivering training to frontline staff and promoting "cash-first" emergency support.
- **Promote uptake of public food provision such as free school meals or Healthy Start Scheme and support community food initiatives nurturing food literacy. Ensure children from households with No Recourse to Public Funds can access free school meals.** In January 2022, the Healthy Start Scheme uptake in Hounslow was 49% of all eligible participants. After [awareness and educational interventions](#), it rose to 57% in January 2023. With further targeted promotion, uptake reached 71% in 2024.
- **Ensure that marginalised groups, such as disabled people, asylum seekers and refugees, have equal access to food, for example by factoring in needs such as culturally appropriate food, physical access to venues, utilising non-digital communication channels.** Conwy County Borough Council and the Conwy Local Food Partnership ran cooking sessions for adults with learning disabilities, resulting in better independence and more confidence in accessing and preparing healthy food.
- **Harness the Welsh Curriculum to encourage learning about and through food and improve food literacy across all ages** - Cardiff Food Hour, Cegin y Bobl, Eco-schools, Healthy Schools Scheme or Nutrition Skills for Life are some of the programs that support schools to provide healthy, sustainable meals and improve food culture (staff training, involving parents and children in menu design. Local authorities can encourage schools to take up Food and Fun programme.
- **Embed [Marmot principles](#) in approaches to improving public health through diets - recognising poverty and inequality as a core driver of ill health.** Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership have aligned their [Community Food Strategy](#) to Marmot principles.

Size of Wales - Consultation Response Food Poverty and Healthy Food Access in Wales

1. To what extent does the Welsh Government's approach support provision of healthy and nutritious food for all, and what actions could it take?

The Welsh Government's current approach shows positive intent through introducing free school meals and initiatives such as the veg in schools.

However, the approach remains insufficient because it defines "healthy" too narrowly in nutritional terms and does not adequately address:

- The dominance of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) in children's diets,
- The sustainability and provenance of food,
- The embedded environmental and social risks within food supply chains (e.g. soy and palm-based animal feeds linked to tropical deforestation).

As a result, the approach does not yet fully support long-term, equitable access to healthy and nutritious food and the goal of being a globally responsible nation.

The Welsh Government could strengthen its approach by:

- Embedding sustainability and provenance standards into school food regulations and procurement.
- Adopting a "less but better" model for meat and dairy, supplemented with plant proteins.
- Explicitly defining and restricting UPFs in school food and food education.
- Supporting a whole-school approach to food, including education, co-design with learners, and practical cooking and growing opportunities.

2. What are the main barriers to addressing food poverty sustainably and preventatively, and how can they be overcome?

Main barriers:

- Budgetary constraints on local authorities.
- Lack of clear action on UPFs.
- Embedded deforestation and social risks within "local" food supply chains.
- Risk of reduced uptake if healthier menus are imposed without engagement.
- Limited capacity for whole-school food education and cultural change.

How these can be overcome:

1. Put Food at the Centre of Government Policy

Food should be treated as core national infrastructure, not a peripheral issue. Welsh Government should adopt a cross-government food strategy that links health, climate, nature, education, farming, procurement and social justice, with clear accountability and targets.

2. Shift Public Procurement to Drive Change

Public sector food purchasing should be used as a lever for transformation by:

- Leveraging **bulk purchasing and guaranteed demand** to make healthy, ethical food affordable at scale.
- Improving access to public contracts for **small, Welsh, organic, agroecological and ethical producers**.
- Excluding ingredients linked to **deforestation and ecosystem destruction**, particularly soy, palm oil and imported beef from high-risk regions.
- Applying a **social value framework** so procurement decisions consider long-term health, climate, biodiversity and social outcomes, not just lowest price.

3. Adopt a “Less but Better” Food Model

To balance cost, health and sustainability:

- Reduce overall meat and dairy volumes while improving their quality (pasture-fed, organic, nature-friendly systems).
- Replace part of animal protein with **plant proteins** (beans, lentils, pulses, peas), maintaining nutritional value while reducing cost and environmental impact.
- Reformulate popular dishes rather than removing them, ensuring acceptability and uptake.

This reduces deforestation risk, lowers emissions, improves dietary quality and keeps meals affordable.

4. Build Food Literacy and Food Citizenship

Every child should leave school food-literate. This means understanding where food comes from, how it affects their health, climate and nature, and how to prepare it.

This requires:

- Whole-school food education, including UPFs, marketing literacy, sustainability and cooking skills.
- Curriculum integration of food systems, climate and health.
- Opportunities to grow, cook, share and design food in schools and connect with farmers / food producers.
- Investment in staff training and time for food activities.

5. Empower Communities and Learners

Food policy should be co-created with those it affects.

- Involve pupils, families and communities in menu design and food decisions.
- Support community food partnerships, community growing and local food infrastructure.
- Recognise young people as agents of change, not passive recipients.

This improves uptake, reduces stigma, strengthens cultural connection to food, and builds lasting behaviour change.

6. Explicitly Address Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)

UPFs should be clearly defined and actively reduced in public food provision and education.

- Restrict their presence in schools and public settings.
- Teach children and families about their health, social and environmental impacts.
- Align food standards with long-term public health goals.

Reducing UPFs is a preventative investment in physical, mental and planetary health.

7. Build Food System Resilience and Equity

Food poverty should be addressed structurally, not just through emergency response.

This means:

- Increasing Welsh fruit, vegetable and pulse production (edible horticulture).
- Supporting farmers to transition to nature-friendly and deforestation-free systems.
- Strengthening local supply chains to reduce dependence on volatile global markets.
- Ensuring everyone can access affordable, healthy food regardless of income.

Emergency food aid remains necessary, but should sit within a wider strategy of prevention and resilience.

3. Which examples of good practice tackle food poverty effectively and how should they be supported?

The **Deforestation Free Chickpea Korma**¹ pilot in Monmouthshire developed by Size of Wales demonstrates good practice by:

- Engaging pupils in auditing their own meals for environmental and social impacts.
- Enabling pupils to co-design healthier, sustainable alternatives.
- Linking food choices to climate, nature and global responsibility.
- This approach successfully combined nutrition, sustainability and learner agency, and showed early evidence of sustained engagement.

4. Does the approach sufficiently balance emergency support and prevention?

The current approach does not yet strike an adequate balance. While emergency food provision is necessary, the submission highlights that without strong preventative measures, particularly around UPFs, food education, and food system sustainability, long-term food poverty and poor health outcomes will persist.

The Welsh Government should:

- Anchor prevention within universal school food provision, ensuring high quality, nutritious and sustainable meals.
- Integrate food education, advertising literacy, cooking skills and growing activities into school life.
- Use a social value approach to justify preventative investment based on long-term health, environmental and economic benefits.

Barbara Davies Quy Barbara@sizeofwales.org.uk

¹ Pupils identified that the chicken korma dish had a high deforestation risk as the chicken was likely to be fed on soy. As a result, the pupils redesigned menu using chickpeas and other beans and pulses. This dish was approximately 10p cheaper per portion than the chicken version, provided the same amount of protein and had a significantly lower environmental footprint. Crucially, involving pupils directly in designing the recipe increased their engagement and willingness to eat the dish, demonstrating that co-creation can support healthier, more sustainable food choices without increasing costs or reducing nutritional value.



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Agenda Item 4.1

Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r
Dyfodol Cymru

Tramshed Tech, Stryd Pendyris
Caerdydd, CF11 6BH

Future Generations
Commissioner for Wales

Tramshed Tech, Pendyris Street
Caerdydd, CF11 6BH

By email

15 December 2025

Dear Jenny,

I am pleased to share with you the results of our recent [Stakeholder Survey](#) into the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG Act) and the work of my office. This has been a valuable and insightful exercise—one that we have not undertaken before—and it has provided me with both important learning about the implementation of the WFG Act. As we enter a new decade for this pioneering legislation, the findings also make clear that there remains much work to do to ensure its continued impact.

The survey assessed awareness and understanding of the legislation, explored stories of its impact, and highlighted strengths and challenges. The results are encouraging. **Almost 80% of respondents told us they have a good understanding of the Act, with just 4% saying they had never heard of it. In terms of professional impact, 85% gave a score of at least three out of five, demonstrating that the vast majority believe the Act has influenced their work or organisation.**

Awareness of the work of my office is also strong. **Over 75% of respondents scored their awareness at three or above out of five, and only 7% selected the lowest rating. I was particularly pleased to see the positive favourability ratings for the office, with 86% scoring at least three out of five in their impression of our work and the work of my team.**

However, the survey also highlights areas where we can improve.

- The report suggests that more can be done to raise awareness of the WFG Act among some stakeholders. As a result, my office will seek to expand the reach of our online and in-person training sessions. We are developing more training resources in collaboration with organisations like Welsh Government to help people in all roles understand and implement the WFG Act effectively. You can see upcoming learning opportunities [here](#) and our resources are [here](#). The report identified groups that need more targeted information, such as local elected members and Town and Community Councils. We will increase our communications with these audiences.
- The report highlighted barriers to implementation of the WFG Act. We will work with Cabinet Secretaries, Welsh Government officials and others to overcome these barriers.
- The survey results were helpful in highlighting challenges that require my attention. I will take these into account when reviewing my work programme and when considering new areas for investigation.



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I invite Welsh Government, the Senedd, public bodies and other organisations to review the report, and identify the steps they can take to improve wider implementation of the WFG Act.

I want to express my gratitude to the Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee for their ongoing post-legislative review of the WFG Act. I look forward to reading their final report in the new year and hope that this stakeholder survey will help inform their important work.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who took part in the survey. Your input is invaluable.

Over the past decade, the Act has made a significant and positive impact. People in Cymru are rightly proud of this approach to improving well-being and planning for the long term. But there is much more work to do and I look forward to working with you to realise Wales's long-term well-being goals.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Walker

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: British Sign Language
(Wales) Bill
Ein cyf/Our ref: JH/PO/652/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice Committee

15 December 2025

Dear Jenny,

British Sign Language (Wales) Bill

Thank you for the Equality and Social Justice Committee Report published on 5 December 2025 regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill as part of stage 1 scrutiny.

I am grateful to the Committee for its considered stage 1 scrutiny.

Alongside the Member in charge of the Bill, I have carefully considered the Committee's report.

Please see my response in Annex 1 to the set of recommendations in advance of the Stage 1 General Principles Debate.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

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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.

Annex 1: Response to Equality and Social Justice Committee’s report on the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill – December 2025

<p>Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that the Senedd agrees the general principles of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill at Stage 1.</p>
<p>Accept Welsh Government supports the general principles of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill and welcomes the Committee’s scrutiny at Stage 1.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge reviews the description of BSL used in the Explanatory Memorandum to address the concerns raised by stakeholders and considers the merits of including a clear definition of BSL on the face of the Bill and whether amendments are needed to achieve this. The Member in Charge should aim to set out his response to this recommendation by 7 January 2026 so that if the Bill progresses, Members can consider the response ahead of Stage 2 proceedings.</p>
<p>Accept Welsh Government notes stakeholder concerns regarding the description of BSL used in the Explanatory Memorandum. Welsh Government will work with the Member in Charge as needed to consider and update this description and consider the merits of including a clear definition of BSL on the face of the Bill.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge of the Bill brings forward amendments at Stage 2 which would require Welsh Ministers to publish the BSL guidance within the same or similar timescales as those specified in relation to the national BSL strategy. The committee thinks that unless a compelling argument is made for a different timescale, 18 months after the Bill is enacted should be sufficient and appropriate.</p>
<p>Accept Welsh Government agrees that BSL guidance should be published within a similar timescale to the national BSL strategy and that 18 months after the Act is brought into force is a reasonable timescale for this to take place.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge brings forward amendments at Stage 2 which would require Welsh Ministers to consult on the content of the BSL guidance prior to its publication.</p>
<p>Accept Welsh Government agrees that Welsh Ministers should consult on the BSL guidance prior to its publication.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that The Welsh Government should set out in response to this report:</p>

- how it expects listed public bodies to collaborate across administrative boundaries in the preparation of local plans;
- how it will build the capacity of listed public bodies so that they are equipped with the right support and expertise to prepare and execute local plans effectively; and
- provide confirmation that the Implementation Team for the Bill has dedicated resources to fulfil this recommendation. The Welsh Government should confirm that this will be in place ahead of the Stage 1 debate scheduled for 17 December 2025.

Accept

Listed public bodies are already required to work collaboratively. Welsh Government intends that the BSL guidance will set out ways of working to support cost effective planning, engagement with the BSL community, reporting and delivery for listed public bodies. The BSL guidance will include expectations for collaboration across administrative boundaries in preparing local BSL plans. This guidance will be informed by the BSL Adviser and assisting panel. It is intended that the BSL Adviser and assisting panel will support capacity building for listed public bodies.

The Welsh Government established a BSL policy team within the Equality and Human Rights Division in 2024/25. This team will oversee the implementation of the legislation, should it become law, and fulfil this recommendation.

It has also been agreed that provision will be made from Welsh Government budgets for the full costs of the first year of the implementation of the Bill (up to a maximum of £214,300 in 2026-27 only), based on the figures in the Members RIA. Funding beyond 2026-27 will need to be determined by the next Government following the election in May 2026.

Recommendation 6.

The Committee notes that under section 7(2) it is envisaged that Welsh Ministers must produce progress reports in every period of 3 years after publication of the national strategy. The committee recommends that the early progress reports required by the Bill, should it become law, involve consideration of whether other public bodies should be added.

Accept

Welsh Government agrees that the Welsh Government progress reports required every 3 years should include consideration as to whether additional public bodies should be included under the Bill, should it become law. The BSL adviser and assisting panel should provide advice on these considerations.

Recommendation 7.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government and the Member in Charge consider how the appointments process can ensure that the needs of the Deaf community are reflected appropriately in the appointments process for the BSL Adviser. We would welcome more detail on this matter in response to this report, which we expect in time for the Stage 1 debate on 17 December 2025.

Accept

Welsh Government will ensure that the appointments process for the BSL Adviser reflects the needs of the deaf BSL signing community. Welsh Government will

work with the deaf BSL community through the Welsh Governments BSL Stakeholder Group to address any barriers in the process. Consideration will be given to the provision of any required training to the deaf BSL signing community, to enable a diverse range of applicants. This may include training in relation to both the application process and interviews.

Recommendation 8.

The Committee recommends that the role of BSL Adviser is recognised as a public appointment that is eligible for pre-appointment scrutiny and that the appropriate committee in the next Senedd is offered the opportunity to conduct a pre-appointment hearing with the preferred candidate. The committee agrees that this change can be achieved informally through agreement between the Welsh Government and the Senedd and should be made now in order to provide a firm signal of intent for the next Welsh Government and Senedd.

Accept

The Welsh Government agrees that the BSL Adviser should be recognised as eligible for pre-appointment scrutiny. This was confirmed in the evidence session to Committee.

Recommendation 9.

The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge clarifies the options available to complainants requiring recourse in instances where public services are failing to meet their duties under the Bill (if enacted by the Senedd) and considers whether any changes to the Explanatory Memorandum are required that could help in that regard.

Accept

Welsh Government will support the Member in Charge to clarify options for complainants where public services fail to meet their duties under the Bill and provide any information needed to update the Explanatory Memorandum as required.

Recommendation 10.

The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge brings forward amendments at Stage 2 which would place duties on Welsh Ministers to prepare and issue guidance on the appropriate route for BSL signers to make complaints about access to services. This should be accompanied by a duty to consult on that guidance with the Office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales specified as a mandatory consultee.

Reject

Welsh Government does not consider it necessary to place a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare and issue guidance on complaints routes, or to specify the Office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales as a mandatory consultee. Existing mechanisms and guidance provide appropriate routes for BSL signers to raise concerns.

Recommendation 11.

The Committee recommends that the Member in Charge brings forward amendments at Stage 2 to ensure engagement and co-production by placing a

formal requirement on Welsh Ministers to consult Deaf BSL signers on the national BSL strategy and guidance.

Accept

Welsh Government agrees that the Member in Charge should bring forward amendments at Stage 2 to place a formal requirement on Welsh Ministers to consult BSL signers on the national BSL strategy and guidance.

Recommendation 12.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government ramps up efforts to expand the BSL interpreter workforce and commits to:

- reviewing the timescales for actions that are to be taken forward in the BSL Stakeholder Route Map to ensure they are aligned with the Bill;
- Setting annual targets for the training and recruitment of BSL interpreters and translators;
- Setting clearer and more ambitious target deadlines to prevent slippage.

Accept

Welsh Government is committed to expanding the BSL interpreter workforce. The BSL Task and Finish Stakeholder Group have made recommendations on the BSL workforce and the timing implications related to recommendations. Welsh Government will publish its BSL Route Map in early 2026, this will be informed by the advice of the Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group considered a draft Route Map in their September meeting. Short-term actions will be completed within 18 months.

Long-term actions to support and develop the BSL workforce, including BSL interpreters should be included in the national BSL strategy, with clear targets for the training and recruitment of BSL interpreters and translators. These actions must be informed by the BSL Task and Finish Stakeholder Group recommendations report, the BSL Advisor and assisting panel.

Agenda Item 4.3

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/655/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament

16 December 2025

Dear Jenny

In your report “Anything’s Achievable with the Right Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap” you asked the Welsh Government to report back to the Committee setting out its progress in delivering Recommendation 4, copied below for reference.

*Rec 4: The Welsh Government must seek urgent changes to the Disability Confident Scheme which address the concerns regarding the general effectiveness and levels of trust in the Scheme, particularly at Levels 1 and 2. The Welsh Government should, by the end of **April 2025**, set out in detail:*

- *what improvements it would like to see made to the Disability Confident Scheme (including its accreditation arrangements);*
- *how it intends to secure these changes; and*
- *a timeline by which we can expect the improvements to be implemented.*

Should the Welsh Government fail to secure the necessary changes to the Disability Confident Scheme within existing structures, then it should give full consideration to developing a new, ambitious Welsh kitemark which commands the respect of employers and employees in Wales.

The Welsh Government should report back on progress with this recommendation by December 2025.

Since the publication of your report, we have taken forward a number of actions.

In **June** our Equality, Race, and Disability Evidence Units worked with the Disability Rights Taskforce to co-produce research into the Disability Confident Scheme. A copy of the research report can be found here: [Research exploring ways to improve the Disability Confident Employer Scheme in Wales | 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.

Officials, including the team of Disabled People's Employment Champions, have established an effective working relationship with DWP officials who are responsible for the policy and delivery of the Disability Confident scheme. In **August**, we provided feedback to the DWP on the improvements we believe are needed to make the scheme more robust and effective, drawing on the evidence provided by the research. In addition, we worked with the DWP to ensure Welsh stakeholders were consulted on the proposed reforms to Disability Confident.

DWP officials regularly attend the Welsh Government's Disabled People's Employment Working Group at which they provide updates on the scheme and hear directly from Welsh stakeholders.

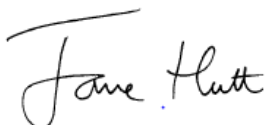
In **September**, I wrote to every devolved public sector body and local authority in Wales encouraging them to take steps to become a Disability Confident 'Leader' and set a timeframe for achieving it. This has resulted in several organisations contacting our Disabled People's Employment Champions for support.

This month, we published our Disabled People's Rights Plan. As you are aware, this is informed by a set of recommendations co-produced with our Disability Rights Taskforce. It sets out our ambition for a Wales where disabled people can enjoy equitable rights, inclusion and participation, and includes further actions to encourage more employers to adopt Disability Confident leader status.

In **January** 2026, we will hold the inaugural meeting of our Disability Confident Leaders Forum for Wales. The Forum will bring together Welsh employers who have achieved leader status, encourage them to share best practice and work with other employers in their community, region or sector to champion Disability Confident leader status.

I trust this update provides the Committee with an overview of the steps we are taking to improve the reach and impact of the Disability Confident scheme in Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'H'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Agenda Item 4.4

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/657/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament

17 December 2025

Dear Jenny,

As I mentioned in the Committee's evidence session on 1 December, I welcome the Committee's work to provide scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and look forward to considering the Committee's report. Please find below responses to two actions that were recorded during the meeting.

Action 1: Building Culture for Co-production Manual

The Committee requested a link to the Welsh Government's recently published '*Building culture for co-production*' – a manual for applying the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This manual brings together the most popular elements of our learning on the five ways of working, inner-development goals and culture change into one document and is used to promote best practice.

[Building culture for co-production \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Action 2: Third Sector Involvement in Public Services Boards (PSBs)

I committed to writing to the Committee on the involvement of the third sector in PSBs. To inform this response, officials wrote to all 13 PSBs seeking information on representation, mechanisms for influence, challenges, and examples of good practice. Responses have been received from six PSBs to date, and a summary is provided in the annex below.

The responses confirm that all PSBs have formal third sector representation, usually through local voluntary councils or umbrella organisations. Mechanisms to ensure influence include statutory invitee status, equal membership rights, participation in sub-groups, and in some cases leadership roles.

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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.

While challenges remain such as capacity constraints, rurality, and ensuring smaller community groups' voices are heard, there is much good practice across Wales. Examples include strategies shaped by third sector research, engagement networks that inform decision-making, funding to support climate action and food resilience, and strong partnership cultures with extensive involvement in areas such as youth justice, carers support, and equality networks.

Detailed individual responses from each PSB are included **in the annex** for reference. My officials would be happy to share any further responses with the Committee should they be received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'H'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
 Welsh Government

Annex: Detailed Individual PSB responses

PSB	Representation	Mechanisms for Influence	Challenges	Good Practice
Pack Powys Page 48	PAVO formally invited as participant; CEO and Chair attend PSB meetings.	Terms of Reference require consensus; involvement in working groups like Engagement & Insight Network.	Rurality limits direct involvement of smaller groups; need for better awareness of PSB role.	Co-opted PAVO member on Scrutiny Committee; 6-month engagement reports inform PSB decisions.
Pembrokeshire	PAVS and PLANED are full PSB members with voting rights; PAVS CEO is Vice-Chair.	Equal membership status; active role in workstreams on poverty and strengthening communities.	Capacity/resource imbalance; limited public profile of PSB.	Tackling Poverty Strategy shaped by third sector research; strong collaboration in community resilience workstreams.
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	All local CVCs represented; Awen Cultural Trust and housing associations involved.	Equal influence under Terms of Reference; representation on task groups and sub-boards.	Limited capacity for regional work; perception of insufficient funding for engagement.	Climate Action Network funded by PSB; third sector leads on climate risk and food resilience workstreams.

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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.

PSB	Representation	Mechanisms for Influence	Challenges	Good Practice
Conwy/Denbighshire	CVSC and DVSC Chief Officers are PSB members.	Formal membership ensures voice in Well-being Assessment and Plan development.	Capacity and resources remain a constraint.	Alzheimer's/Dementia Friendly initiative delivered jointly with third sector partners.
Cardiff	C3SC is statutory invitee; CEO sits on PSB and chairs Public Services Equality Network.	Formal governance role; active participation in PSB meetings and sub-groups; sector-wide engagement via C3SC.	Representing diverse sector voices; capacity constraints for smaller groups.	Strong partnership culture; extensive involvement in youth justice, carers support, neurodiversity, and safeguarding.
Anglesey/Gwynedd	Third sector actively involved through Medrwn Môn and Mantell Gwynedd; formal invited members attending regularly.	Equal status in decisions; opportunities to contribute in meetings and surveys; collaboration on Active Travel Charter and wellbeing assessments.	Resource constraints compared to other Board members; organisations do their best with limited capacity.	Signing the North Wales Active Travel Charter; supporting community groups in innovative projects; collaboration on wellbeing assessments.

Agenda Item 4.5



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5 January 2026

Annwyl Angharad,

I write in response to your email on 17 December 2025 seeking further information following my appearance before the Equality and Social Justice Committee on 15 December. The information provided here relate specifically to equality data and the relationship between deprivation and imprisonment.

Equality data

HM Prison and Probation Service's [Offender Equalities Annual Report](#) present a range of statistics on prisoners in England and Wales and their protected characteristics. These include data on sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ethnicity, religion, mother and baby units and pregnant prisoners. The annual report does not, however, include *any* information on disability for prisoners on the basis that these data remain 'limited'. Although HMPPS's annual report (and accompanying data tables) include a range of data sources, the release offers *no* breakdown for Welsh prisons (i.e. the characteristics of prisoners held in the Welsh prison estate) or Welsh prisoners held across England and Wales (i.e. based on home address prior to entering custody).

The Ministry of Justice's quarterly [Offender Management Statistics](#) also provide information on prisoners broken down by sex, age, ethnicity, religion, and nationality ('British' or 'Foreign') in

England and Wales. The *Prison Population Data Tool* also provides access to information on the age and ethnicity of prisoners held in each prison in Wales, although there is no breakdown for Welsh prisoners (based on home address prior to entering custody). The inaugural *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release* includes information on the number of Welsh prisoners (based on home address) by age, sex, ethnicity, and religion.

The link between poverty and deprivation

During the evidence session on 15 December, I alluded to the fact that levels of poverty and deprivation in Wales may offer the most plausible explanation for its table topping imprisonment rate. Wider research on the social and political forces underpinning criminal justice policy show that factors such as poverty and deprivation are likely to result in more people coming into contact with the criminal justice system ([Houchin, 2005](#); [Reiman and Leighton, 2010](#); [Wacquant, 2009](#)). A report co-authored by colleagues and I in 2022 [found](#) that the imprisonment rate for the ten most deprived local authorities in England was ten times greater (307 prisoners per 100,000) than that of the ten least deprived local authorities in England (30 per 100,000). The fact that poverty remains a prevalent and persistent issue in Wales ([Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2025](#)), alongside evidence pointing towards a correlation between imprisonment rates and deprivation levels in Wales ([Jones and Davies, 2019](#)), underlines the need for this issue to be explored further.

Due to the lack of capacity and funding for research on criminal justice in Wales, there is currently limited scope to carry out this vital work. The Wales Governance Centre has [repeatedly](#) called for the establishment of a Welsh Criminal Justice Observatory to be based in Cardiff University's School of Law and Politics. The Observatory would seek to inform public and political debate by carrying out in-depth research on the operation of the criminal justice system in Wales, including Wales' table topping imprisonment rate. Following on from my appearance before the committee on 15 December, I would like to reiterate the need for the Welsh Government to provide funding to support the establishment a Welsh Criminal Justice Observatory based at the Wales Governance Centre.

I hope that the supplementary information provided above is of use to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's ongoing work on *The Criminal Justice System in Wales*. If you wish to discuss anything included further or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rob Jones

Agenda Item 4.6

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: JH/PO/002/26

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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SeneddLJC@senedd.wales

5 January 2026

Dear Mike,

I am writing in accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement to notify you that the 4 Nations Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Work and Pensions will meet on 19 January 2026.

This will be the second meeting of the 4 Nations DWP IMG which I will chair. The Minister for Culture, Skills & Social Partnership, Jack Sargeant MS, will also be in attendance, and we will both represent the Welsh Government at this in-person meeting.

I anticipate the meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest regarding employability support for disabled people and for young people.

I have copied this letter to the Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

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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.

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: JH-/01066/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality & Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff, CF99 1SN

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

5 January 2026

Dear Jenny

Thank you for your letter of 1 December regarding the Welcome Ticket for asylum seekers in Wales. I welcome the Equality & Social Justice Committee's continued interest in our Nation of Sanctuary commitments, and I am grateful for the opportunity to provide further clarity on the challenges we encountered in developing the Welcome Ticket element of the Welcome Connectivity Project.

Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) were supportive of the project but, under Home Office contract terms, could not share or verify service-user information with third parties, including Welsh Government or Transport for Wales. These restrictions stem from Home Office requirements and GDPR, not reluctance on CRH's part.

After confirmation in June 2025 that CRH could not verify eligibility, we explored whether local authorities could take on this additional responsibility. While supportive, authorities faced capacity pressures and the need for agreement across 22 councils, which was not feasible within the timeframe. We have also needed to give consideration to the Strategic Partnership Agreement with local government which we agreed earlier this year, which includes commitments to fair funding in relation to new responsibilities. The 2022 Asylum Seeker Transport Pilot relied on intensive manual verification by third-sector partners. Though effective for evidence gathering, it was resource-heavy, short-term, and not scalable.

Updated modelling estimated annual costs of £1.8m–£3.8m, far exceeding the £700k allocated for 2025/26. Previous funding streams ended in March 2024, and transport

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budgets remain under significant pressure. Any alternative verification model would have increased costs further.

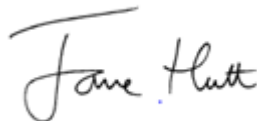
Stakeholders also raised concerns about the risks of harassment associated with visible asylum specific smartcards, increasing community tensions and anti migrant sentiment, the potential wellbeing impacts if support were to end after six months, and perceptions of unfairness when compared with other low income groups.

There were also concerns that any long-term scheme could affect Section 95 support payments.

With regards the use of MyTravel Pass. This system uses datasets Welsh Government can lawfully access. No equivalent route exists for asylum seeker data, and the Home Office has not permitted third-party verification.

Although the Welcome Ticket cannot proceed as planned, we remain committed to reducing transport barriers for asylum seekers. Work is underway to promote existing concessionary schemes and explore locally led models. I hope this clarifies the legal, financial, and operational factors behind our decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first letter 'J'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Jane Hutt, MS
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

1 December 2025

Thank you for your update on the Welcome Ticket for asylum seekers scheme, which we noted at our meeting on 17 November.

We were disappointed to learn that the Welsh Government is unable to fulfil its commitment to this scheme especially given your clear support as Cabinet Secretary. It is essential that a full explanation of the obstacles encountered is provided by the government. In particular, we require clarity on the role ClearSprings has played in obstructing progress, together with detailed information on the contractual and legal constraints you referenced. Given the significance of the principles that are at stake, we consider full transparency to be necessary in the public interest and expect a comprehensive response. We would also ask for further clarification of the differences between this scheme and the mytravelpass scheme for young people which have enabled the latter to become operational but not the former.

We thank you again for your update and look forward to your response in due course.

Your sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Welsh Parliament



Ein cyf/Our ref: HID-PO-004-26

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru

9 January 2026

Dear Mike

I am writing in accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement, and further to my letter of 11 November, to draw to your attention a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) summarising discussions at the most recent meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee ('IMSC').

This letter has been copied to the Chairs of the following Committees: Finance; Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs; Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations; Health and Social Care; and Equality and Social Justice.

Yours sincerely,

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

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