

## **Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee**

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5 (Ty Hywel)

Meeting date: 10 November 2025

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 – 15:00)

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

(13:30)

#### **2 Post-legislative scrutiny of the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act: evidence session with Future Generations Commissioner**

(13:30–15:00)

(Pages 1 – 56)

Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Marie Brousseau Navarro, Deputy Commissioner and Director for Health

Heledd Morgan, Director of Implementation and Impact

#### **3 Papers to note**

(15:00)

##### **3.1 Consultation response from Ombudsman Wales regarding the scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

(Pages 57 – 61)

##### **3.2 Correspondence to the Chair from Julie Doyle regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

(Pages 62 – 68)



- 3.3 Correspondence to the Chair from Stephen Brattan–Wilson of the Association of Sign Language Interpreters regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**  
(Pages 69 – 77)
- 3.4 Correspondence to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding follow–up information relating to the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**  
(Pages 78 – 80)
- 3.5 Correspondence to the Chair from Llais regarding the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**  
(Pages 81 – 90)
- 3.6 Correspondence to the Chair from Rhidian Hurle of Digital Health Care Wales regarding further information relating to the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**  
(Page 91)
- 3.7 Correspondence to the Chair from the Independent Monitoring Authority regarding changes to the immigration rules**  
(Pages 92 – 95)
- 3.8 Correspondence to the Chair from the Petitions Committee regarding "Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents"**  
(Pages 96 – 101)
- 3.9 Correspondence to the Chair from the Local Government and Housing Committee regarding the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers**  
(Pages 102 – 121)
- 3.10 Correspondence to the Chair from Dr Robert Jones of the Wales Governance Centre regarding "Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025"**  
(Pages 122 – 129)
- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**  
(15:00)

## **Private meeting**

(15:00 – 16:00)

### **5 Post-legislative scrutiny of the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act: engagement findings**

(15:00 – 15:15)

(Pages 130 – 181)

Rhayna Mann, Citizen Engagement Senior Manager, Welsh Parliament

### **6 Post-legislative scrutiny of the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act: consideration of evidence**

(15:15 – 15:30)

### **7 The European Union Settlement Scheme: consideration of draft report**

(15:30–16:00)

(Pages 182 – 198)

Sara Moran, Senedd Research, Welsh Parliament

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol | Equality and Social Justice Committee

Ymateb gan: Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol Cymru | Evidence from: Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

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Senedd  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Jenny,

**Re: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: post-legislative scrutiny**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's post-legislative inquiry into the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. I welcome the Committee's proactive steps in undertaking this important work as we mark the tenth anniversary of this landmark legislation.

As you will be aware, I recently published my statutory [Future Generations Report 2025](#), which provides a comprehensive assessment of how Wales is performing to deliver on Wales's seven well-being goals. This report includes detailed analysis, case studies, and 50 recommendations aimed at improving implementation across Welsh Government and public bodies. I would encourage the Committee to reflect on the findings and recommendations of this report as part of its inquiry.

Importantly, the report includes a specific recommendation that a post-legislative review of the WFG Act should be undertaken by Welsh Government. The Auditor General makes the same recommendation in his recent report, ['No time to lose.'](#)

The Committee's inquiry is an important opportunity for us to collectively consider how we strengthen implementation of the WFG Act and deliver better outcomes for current and future generations.

To properly review the effectiveness of the WFG Act and to consider future legislative amendments, I encourage policymakers to involve the people of Wales, in keeping with the commitment made in 2014 through the national conversation 'The Wales We Want'.

In submitting this letter, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the following key points for consideration:

1. **The WFG Act is delivering positive change** – The law is making an impact today and

for the long-term. Evidence shows that the WFG Act is guiding important decisions by public bodies and embedding sustainable development. The annual Well-being of Wales report shows the extent of progress towards the seven national well-being goals. There is positive change but there is much more to do. I have provided detailed evidence of the impact of the WFG Act later in this submission.

2. **People support the vision** – There is widespread commitment to the WFG Act amongst leaders and employees of public bodies. This support and pride in the Welsh approach to protecting the interest of future generations extends to voluntary organisations and businesses too. Where the public is aware of the law, people express support for its aims. The WFG Act was shaped by the national conversation in 2014, ‘The Wales We Want’. It is a people’s Act. We must continue to honour and deliver on the commitments we made to the people of Wales and to our future generations.
3. **We must accelerate progress**– While progress is being made, we are not on track to achieve our seven well-being goals. My Future Generations report 2025 identifies areas where implementation must be improved. However, as the Auditor General has said too, the WFG Act has increased in prominence. There is growing awareness and understanding of the WFG Act, and as time goes on, public bodies are getting better at implementing it. Nonetheless, more action is needed. This requires commitment and leadership from public bodies as well as the necessary skills and resources to turn intention into action.
4. **The approach is essential for Wales’s future** – All countries must prepare for the future. The WFG Act provides the framework we need in Wales to prepare for future challenges, such as the climate emergency and demographic shifts, as well as to harness future opportunities, such as green growth and artificial intelligence. It ensures we look ahead at future trends and take a more preventative approach, improving outcomes and delivering better value for money in the long run. If we did not have the framework of the WFG Act, we would need to replace it with something else.
5. **The law should be strengthened** – After ten years of learning, there are aspects of the law itself which could be strengthened. My views are set out in this submission. The inquiry presents an important opportunity to consider any changes collectively.
6. **Wales is a global leader** – Wales is a pioneer but not an outlier. The WFG Act remains a pioneering piece of legislation, inspiring similar approaches internationally. At a time of growing global momentum around intergenerational fairness and sustainability, Wales’ leadership offers soft power and international influence which we should continue to harness.

### Committee Terms of Reference

In this section I respond to each of the areas outlined in the terms of reference and look



forward to providing further detail and evidence during the oral session in November.

## 1. How far the intended objective of the WFG Act is being achieved

### How the Act is making an impact

There is much to recognise about the progress made and the impact delivered since the WFG Act came into force. The Act has:

- framed debate and helped get issues on the agenda, for example the idea of a [universal basic income](#), which led to a basic income pilot for care leavers;
- led to many commitments from government, for example the establishment of a [procurement centre of excellence](#) following my office's recommendation and most recently to changes in the format of the Rivers Summits so that they consider all Welsh rivers and all pollutants and have a greater focus on delivery;
- secured procedural change in how public bodies make decisions, for example see how Bannau Brycheiniog National Park developed its strategic plan [Y Bannau: The Future](#);
- informed policymaking, such as [Welsh Government's new Priorities for Culture](#);
- influenced practical behaviour change, for example the five ways of working are the behaviours the whole of the Welsh public sector are required to demonstrate and my office can now measure that change through the [Ways of Working Progress Checker](#).

### Examples

There are lots of examples of the Act's impact, many of which are contained in my reports, most recently in the [Future Generations Report 2025](#). I have included some further examples below:

- **Ensuring a greater focus on prevention.** The Welsh Government's new Integrated Medium Term Plan Guidance for the health service now includes a strategic objective on prevention. Samia Edmonds MBE, Planning Director of the Healthcare Strategy and Planning Division in Welsh Government has said:

*"The WFG Act remains key to informing and shaping the statutory NHS Wales Planning Framework...The Act is a priority feature of NHS planning, albeit we recognise that there is further progress to be made. As a result, there is now a much stronger focus on prevention and population health cross policy and through NHS planning. The encouragement, challenge and support of the FG office has helped us identify opportunities to work collectively. Prevention and population health is now integral to integrated medium term plans and is the mechanism to drive sustainable service solutions across Wales over time."*

My office developed a definition for prevention with Welsh Government to inform budget strategy and decision-making processes, which are a fundamental part of driving change across public services in Wales.

- **A more sustainable transport system.** [The Llwybr Newydd Transport Strategy](#) is guided by the WFG Act. My team advised officials and convened stakeholders to advocate for a national strategy that increases public transport, walking and cycling. [Research](#) that my office produced in 2018 influenced the rejection of an M4 relief road, which would have burdened future generations with £1.4bn of debt and compromised space for nature and set out the alternative spending priorities. Budget allocations for public transport and active travel infrastructure have increased.
- **Fixing the food system.** The WFG Act is a catalyst for action to fix our food system for future generations. [Food Matters](#) is a short, simple overview of Welsh Government’s food related policies and activities. It illustrates how food related policies are developed and delivered in response to the WFG Act as well as the Programme for Government. In my strategy [Cymru Can](#) and the Future Generations Report 2025, I set out the evidence to show that without improving access to healthy and sustainable diets, Wales cannot achieve the goals of the Act. The WFG Act and the work of my team are stimulating action across Wales. For example, Carmarthenshire Council has designed the first ever Public Services Board food strategy and twelve Welsh councils are now participating in the ‘Welsh Veg in Schools’ programme to supply free school meals with Welsh produce in line with their duties under the WFG Act.
- **Education with the future in mind.** The new national curriculum is shaped by the WFG Act. The [Curriculum for Wales](#) (CfW) implementation plan maps the long-term outcomes of CfW against the seven well-being goals. My team undertook research on [education](#) and on the [long-term skills gap](#). This formed the basis of advice to Welsh Government officials on the national curriculum being based around the WFG Act. My office has also:
  - advised Qualifications Wales on the reform of GCSEs and vocational qualifications to reflect the skills we need for a more prosperous, equal and resilient Wales;
  - collaborated with the WJEC to create a [qualification](#) on the WFG Act which is now being delivered across Wales;
  - advised officials on the national [Employability and Skills Plan](#) to reflect a well-being economy;
  - advocated for a National Nature Service being established.
- **Beyond the public sector:** The Act has impact beyond the public sector. It sets out a national mission which requires all organisations to get behind if we are to be successful. Many private and third sector organisations apply aspects of the legislation voluntarily, for business and other reasons. One of those organisations is the Principality.



Julie-Ann Haines, Chief Executive of Principality Building Society, said: *“The Well-being of Future Generations Act is hugely important – not just to Principality Building Society, but to the private sector as a whole, helping to guide and shape responsible business strategy. While Principality is not bound by the Act, we are compelled as a purpose led mutual in Wales to support its delivery and work collaboratively for the benefit of communities.*

*As a mutual, we are committed to creating lasting impact that extends beyond our scale. Through our sponsorship of the Future Generations Leadership Academy, we support young leaders to better understand the Act and create action to tackle key social issues. Over the past two years, our colleagues have participated in the Academy, focussing on inclusion and financial education initiatives. We have also aligned our community funding approach with the principles of the Act – launching our Future Generations Fund in partnership with Community Foundation Wales. Since 2021, we have supported over 130 different groups, awarding over £1.5million in grants – with the selection criteria embracing the wellbeing goals of a prosperous, more equal Wales.”*

#### The national indicators

The national indicators were put in place to measure progress towards the seven well-being goals. The [Well-being of Wales](#) Report tracks our collective progress towards the national well-being goals using [national indicators](#), providing insight into how effectively we are implementing the Act.

Some indicators have improved, such as the overall employment rate, participation in sport by adults, and police recorded hate crime dropped by 4% compared to the previous year. But some indicators have worsened, including life expectancy in Wales, reflecting rising poverty, inequality, and preventable illnesses.

The national milestones cover several of the national indicators at once. Some national milestones show progress, such as a 27% reduction in direct carbon emissions since the WFG Act was introduced in 2015 (data up to 2021) and the percentage of people volunteering. However, other milestones have remained stagnant or declined.

## 2. Any action which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the WFG Act and its implementation, including any specific drafting issues

Improving the effectiveness of the WFG Act and its implementation is the core mission in my strategy, Cymru Can. Some of my comments below build on previous assessments my office and I have made to Welsh Government and Senedd Committees.

- **Leadership:** Where I see good implementation of the WFG Act, bold leadership in support of brave decisions is a strong and recurrent theme. But this is not happening across Cymru. Therefore, I believe there should be a greater focus on building the knowledge capacity of our public sector leaders and those with responsibility for the corporate areas of change, such as finance, assets and workforce planning. Academi Wales could play a bigger role in this regard.
- **More focus on outcomes:** The focus should be on delivery and outcomes, but the Act and statutory guidance emphasise governance and process (because it was thought they would lead to sustainable long-term decisions). In practice the focus has often been on process to the detriment of outcomes. The statutory guidance could be amended to redress the balance.
- **Resources:** As the Auditor General and I have reported several times, lack of resourcing (across the public sector and my office) is often cited as a reason why the WFG Act has not been implemented as fast as we would like and is one reason why it has not yet delivered the systems wide change it was created to deliver.
- **National indicators and milestones:** The national indicators and milestones are a key element of the WFG Act. They are the envy of many other countries. They help define what matters to us in Wales and how we implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Wales. A key issue is the lack of alignment between national goals, indicators and wellbeing objectives. There are still public bodies that do not integrate their well-being objectives, standing separately from organisational objectives, and not linked to our national goals and performance indicators/milestones. This needs to be the case if we are to deliver on the common purpose.  
The national indicators are not very visible. The annual Well-being of Wales Report deserves more attention from Welsh Government, from public bodies, from the media and the Senedd too.  
Furthermore, milestones were interpreted by Welsh Government as complementing the goals (what will be achieved by 2050) rather than mid-points or milestones on the way to 2050. The latter approach might have helped accelerate progress.
- **Partnerships:** My predecessor and I have consistently called for Welsh Government and public bodies to simplify the partnership landscape in Wales, which is complex and confusing, adding to capacity and resource pressures. This has also been the conclusion of several ESJ and PAPAC Committee reports.
- **Integration:** The WFG Act should frame other policies and legislation. It should not

be seen as a competition, contradiction or an additional layer of burden. For example, there are many assessment requirements in a multitude of laws. These need to come together where possible, e.g. the climate change risk assessments, equality assessments, population needs assessments etc. They should be taken into account by PSBs as they complete their well-being assessments.

- **Communication:** There is a need to ensure consistency in using the language of the WFG Act in legislation, policy, guidance, ministerial statements, performance frameworks and terms of reference for review boards. Currently it can be confusing for public bodies and a barrier to implementation. For example, there are inconsistencies in what we mean by the terms ‘involvement’ compared to ‘consultation.’

### Specific drafting issues

There is case to consider drafting amendments to improve the following issues:

- **Clarity of the application of the five ways of working to everything public bodies and Public Services Boards (PSBs) do.** This might require an amendment to ensure it is not perceived as being limited to only setting well-being objectives.
- **Corporate areas for change.** The concept does not appear on the face of the WFG Act but only in the statutory guidance. The statutory guidance, Shared Purpose, Shared Future 1, outlines how embedding the WFG Act into corporate functions is essential to delivering meaningful change. These corporate areas of change include: corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, asset management, procurement, risk management and performance management. There is a case to include these corporate areas of change in the legislation to raise their importance and visibility as they are such a key driver for the change we need to see.
- **Clarification/overlap of monitoring powers between the Auditor General and the Future Generations Commissioner:** The statutory guidance of the Act outlines the Commissioner’s role as supportive, with the powers of advice, assistance and the ability to carry out reviews. The Auditor General for Wales is described as holding the accountability of public bodies in meeting the Act. Therefore, there is some confusion with the Commissioner’s duty to monitor and assess the progress public bodies are making towards their well-being objectives.
- **Town and Community Councils (TCCs)** should be involved in drafting PSB plans as they are required to help implement them further down the line. This creates an involvement and delivery issue which needs to be addressed. The threshold requirements for the involvement of TCCs is currently a £200K budget over the previous three years. This should be looked at as currently TCCs can come in and out of scope depending on the annual variation of their funding.
- **Advisory Panel:** The membership of my advisory panel is statutory and very specific. There is a case to allow more flexibility in the membership of the advisory panel to provide the range of skills and experience appropriate to the work plan of the

Commissioner. In light of this issue, I have extended the role of my Audit and Risk Committee to undertake an advisory function (as well as an assurance function).

- **Funding from the Senedd:** To protect my independence, there is a case for the Commissioner to stop being funded by the Welsh Government and become funded directly by the Senedd out of the Welsh Consolidated Fund as Audit Wales is.
- **Publication by public bodies and PSBs of objectives, plans and annual reports.** The Act should be amended to ensure there is duty on public bodies and PSBs to send the Commissioner a copy of their objectives and plans as well as their annual reports detailing progress made to meet their objectives. This would make the monitoring of progress much easier and improve transparency/accessibility for the public to identify the relevant documents and progress. There is currently no consistency in the publication and accessibility of such information.
- **Imbalances of powers in relation to public bodies and PSBs:** My office is mandated to provide intensive support to PSBs in designing their assessments and plans, but I have no duty to monitor their progress. On the other hand, I am required to monitor the progress of public bodies in meeting their objectives but have no duty to provide support to them in setting their objectives individually. However, my office does provide general advice through the Future Generations report. Some consistency would be welcome.
- **Public Services Boards:** PSBs are not a legal entity capable of holding funds or of employing staff. They can only rely on the resources and capacity of their members. PSB members have told my office that this is an issue that can inhibit collaboration. I believe the role and functioning of PSBs could be improved.

I must respond to three elements of the work of PSBs in a short space of time: the PSBs' well-being assessment consultation; during the drafting of their objectives; and then again during the formal consultation on plans. This is disproportionate and is not the most effective use of resources. I would recommend the legislation is changed to keep the formal consultation part and to revoke the other two elements. Several PSBs have told my team that the 5-year cycle is too short, meaning that they have to re-do their well-being assessments and plans too often. This reduces their capacity to deliver.

- **Timelines synchronisation** - The Act is based on 5-year cycles in line with Senedd elections. Now that Senedd elections have moved to a 4-year cycle, many requirements will have to happen more often (like the Future Generations reports) which affects the capacity of public bodies and my team as well as PSB cycles. It will also create clashes, for example local government elections are not planned to change which means this will clash with the 2037 Future Generations Report and the arrival of a new Commissioner; one year I will have to produce advice to PSBs as well as produce a Future Generations report; and the Future Trends reports will get out of synchronisation with the local elections. We think the timelines should be reviewed and amended so we can address any issues.

- **Scope and enforceability of the Commissioner’s section 20 review recommendations:** See section 3 for further information.

### 3. Whether the review and reporting requirements under the Act are being met

There is more to do to improve the way reporting across the public sector is aligned, streamlined, and used to drive learning and improvement. This is an area where further support and clarity could enhance the effectiveness of the WFG Act.

#### Reporting and review requirements on public bodies and PSBs:

- **Content of well-being statements:** The statutory guidance of the Act sets out the content of public body well-being statements and states that public bodies are required to review and report annually on the progress they are making towards their well-being objectives and steps. Most public bodies meet these requirements through their regular corporate planning and annual reporting mechanisms. However, some public bodies have not placed their well-being objectives and steps at the heart of their corporate strategies. This is more common in the health sector (as [Audit Wales](#) also reported), with some bodies failing to clearly state their well-being objectives.
- **Review and revision of well-being objectives:** In producing an annual report, public bodies and Public Services Boards must review their well-being objectives and steps. Again, most do this through regular annual reporting mechanisms but given some public bodies have not placed their well-being objectives at the heart of their corporate strategies, a minority of public bodies are not sufficiently revisiting and reviewing their objectives regularly. Timescales are also mismatched in terms of reviewing objectives, which adds to challenges of bodies following the recommendations of the Future Generations Report.
- **Disparity in well-being objectives:** There is currently a lack of a common framework for setting well-being objectives, steps and measuring them, meaning that the current piece-meal approach makes "assessing the progress made towards well-being objectives" impossible. Analysis by my team and by [Audit Wales](#) found that public bodies rarely state the timescales they envisage to meet their well-being objectives, or the resources (including financial) needed to meet them in their well-being statements, despite this being a statutory requirement. A mandated common framework by Welsh Government for every sector would make this significantly easier for the Auditor General for Wales, the Commissioner, and members of the public to understand progress in implementing the Act.
- **Monitoring progress on well-being objectives:** Whilst public bodies and PSBs can set as many well-being objectives and steps as they like, there are currently nearly 300

well-being objectives and over 2,200 steps across the public bodies and 47 objectives, and 296 steps across Public Services Boards. Each objective and/or step often has different associated indicators. Therefore, measuring progress against each of these is highly resource intensive and does not lead to comparable results. I have conducted and commissioned analysis of the well-being objectives, but it is a challenge to resource this and keep up with the changes.

- **Stronger links to well-being goals:** My Future Generations Report 2025 offers advice to public bodies on setting well-being objectives and steps. A common framework, as suggested earlier, mandated by Welsh Government, could help public bodies and Public Services Board make a stronger link between each of their well-being objectives, the well-being goals and well-being indicators when they set and report on their delivery.
- **Impact Assessments:** Adopting a statutory Impact Assessment process for the WFG Act could help improve the application of the Act in decision making and policy design. While there are no statutory WFG Act impact assessments, several public bodies have designed them with the support of my office and use them regularly. A good example of the positive impact of conducting such an impact assessment can be found in relation to the design of the [Welsh Government Waste strategy, Beyond Recycling](#).

### **Commissioner's review powers (Section 20):**

My strongest power is to undertake reviews under Section 20 of the WFG Act. My office has undertaken two investigations so far. These have resulted in Welsh Government making changes to how they implement the Act; and the establishment of a procurement centre of excellence.

The power has been used as the ultimate form of advice when our usual form of advice had not been sufficiently considered or where a recurring issue had been flagged many times as being a key barrier to the implementation of the Act.

As a result of a review, I can make recommendations (suggestions). Although this has not happened, the Act allows public bodies to disregard my recommendations and send a justification for doing so. I have no powers to enforce compliance.

One criticism of the Act is the lack of enforcement powers. This is something the Committee could explore as part of their scrutiny of the enforcement elements of the legislation. One option in relation to Section 20 could be the ability to issue 'directions' or another form of mandated reasonable action which would need to be defined and limited – within devolution boundaries. This might also include some remedial action. There are other options too and legal advice would be needed to explore them.

It should be noted that undertaking Section 20 reviews is resource intensive. My predecessor could hold and use reserves to fund such exercises but changes in UK

accountancy rules mean that this is not an option available to me.

#### **4. The effectiveness of guidance made under the Act**

**Statutory guidance:** Some of the statutory guidance needs to be updated. The points made above reflect some of the changes required to the legislation and to statutory guidance to reflect the lessons we have learned over the last decade. The legislation is a framework, deliberately not prescriptive; but the guidance can be interpreted as a series of processes to complete. My team have already been discussing updating the statutory guidance for Public Services Boards with supporting organisations, including Welsh Government. I would be keen to be involved in any update of the statutory guidance by Welsh Government.

**Guidance from my office:** Alongside the statutory guidance, my team and other supporting organisations in Wales have produced resources and frameworks that support implementation of the Act including: Future Generations Reports; the Ways of Working Progress Checker; journeys towards the well-being goals; frameworks for project, service design and scrutiny; long-term and futures guides; and e-learning modules. We also provide advice to public bodies and, where capacity allows, the voluntary and private sector on applying the Act. For example, we have recently produced a business toolkit.

In 2024/25, we recorded 882 requests for our advice and assistance, a 9.4% increase compared to the year before. 46% of these were from public bodies with duties under the Act. My team receive excellent feedback for the support they provide. Our learning and development sessions have received feedback scores of 6.4 out of 7, with a 100% of attendees reporting improved confidence in applying the Act.

#### **5. How far the Act has been legally binding and enforceable**

##### **Current situation:**

There are no specific enforcement mechanisms in the legislation as it stands. This was done by design and voted upon by the Senedd.

This means that judicial review applies by default. This is a difficult and costly procedure. It might also mean that only a class of people rather than individuals can use it. I understand that none of the very few attempts to use the Act in judicial review have obtained permission from the court to proceed.

There are specific duties in the Act in addition to the general duty which might be better ground for challenge (e.g. the duty to take all reasonable steps to meet well-being objectives).

The Public Services Ombudsman could hear, as I understand it, complaints about the non-compliance with the Act as maladministration, but only if the person could demonstrate personal injustice. This could prove difficult given the nature of the Act's duties.

The role of the Commissioner is designed in the Act to be a promoter not an enforcer. This means that I promote a principle, the sustainable development principle, and help it to be implemented by providing advice and making recommendations. This is the weakest type of Commissioner role.

This is different from the Welsh Language Commissioner, which is set up as a regulator setting standards, checking compliance and sanctioning breaches. A specific tribunal was also created. The Older People and Children's Commissioners are set up as champions of the rights of specific population groups and the Commissioners can support individuals directly to help protect their rights. This supposes that rights are set in law in the first place. The WFG Act does not create rights for future generations or current generations so that model could not apply (but perhaps it could be explored how the new United Nations Declaration on Future Generations could help support this model now it has been adopted).

### **Possible changes:**

The WFG Act is a people's act, and this is why I see value in seeking to amend the legislation to ensure that people have access to easily accessible and affordable redress mechanisms or through the creation of rights (if devolution boundaries allow it or by working with the UK Parliament).

My team worked with the UK Parliamentary drafting team for [Lord Bird's Bill](#). We offered some solutions but recognise the challenges devolution boundaries cause in relation to justice issues in Wales and that the Senedd may not be able to create similar provisions (see clauses 30, investigations, 31 Applications to court, 32 Proceedings and 33 Judicial remedies).

The Bill gives a clear power to individuals to bring proceedings against a public body or to bring a case to the Commission for them to decide if they want to start an investigation.

The Bill created a power to conduct investigations in addition to the review powers similar to the Welsh Act, where the Commission can conduct an investigation if they suspect that a public body has failed to comply with its duties. If a failure were recognised, the Commission could apply directly to the High Court to mandate compliance with the recommendations or other actions chosen by the Court.

Granting us such a power would create significant additional responsibilities for my office through investigation, case management, enforcement policy and resourcing. It would also change the premise of my relationship with public bodies which is based on trust and support rather than fear of sanction.

The powers of the Public Services Ombudsman could alternatively be amended to extend their existing remit to help with the enforcement of the WFG Act.

I have already mentioned amending my review powers to give them more teeth. They could be extended to allowing me to review individual decisions (giving me a case work function)

but without proper resourcing it would detract our work and support to drive change.

The Information Commissioner in connection with Freedom of Information Act 2000 could be another model to explore. They can publish decisions which require compliance, or risk contempt.

Using the model of the Welsh Language Commissioner is another option. They have the strongest enforcement powers of Commissioners in Wales. Some of my advice, for example the Maturity Matrix, already shows some similarities with the Welsh Language Standards.

Importantly, I wanted to stress the preventative nature of the Act which needs not to be lost in discussions about enforcement. The WFG Act was designed to improve administrative practice and stretch organisations—to challenge the status quo and encourage long-term, joined-up, preventative approaches to Wales’ most complex issues. In doing so, it represents a different kind of legislation—one that drives positive behaviours, innovation and shared responsibility rather than compliance through sanctions. It is about preventing harm not compensating for harm done. This is a key feature that needs to be protected whatever enforcement mechanism is chosen this time round. The legislation needs to continue drive change upwards and not be dragged downwards or be distracted by litigation which risks stifling innovation.

I look forward to hearing the views of the public, witnesses, and the Committee on the issue of enforcement.

## **6. How far the Act has represented, and will continue to represent, value for money**

The WFG Act enables a longer-term, preventative approach to policy and public spending, which drives better outcomes and greater efficiency over time.

In his recent report [‘No Time to Lose,’](#) the Auditor General for Wales makes the value for money case clearly. He says: *“I urge public bodies to see the sustainable development principle as a value for money issue. We cannot afford to design solutions that do not meet people’s needs, burden future generations with avoidable higher costs, or miss opportunities to deliver more with the same or less.”*

The case for spending on prevention is unquestionable. For instance, Public Health Wales says that putting in place effective programmes to prevent poor health offers great value for money: “Prevention initiatives such as early years education, vaccination programmes, smoking cessation and support for carers can deliver excellent value for money - with an average return of £14 for every £1 invested in them. They also keep people healthier and address inequalities as well.”

Other public sector organisations will have similar compelling statistics about prevention. In fact, all the five ways of working provide value for money. For example, if we consider long term trends when building schools and hospitals, we can ensure these facilities are future

proofed, limiting the need to make adjustments in years to come.

There are good examples across public bodies of the value for money that is achieved by Act. However, value for money is not considered systematically.

A key finding from the Auditor General's report is: *"Public bodies also need to improve the information they use to inform planning and decision-making, get a better grip on resource implications, and make sure they can understand impact. These are key to achieving and demonstrating value for money, and to applying the sustainable development principle."*

While there is no framework that provides an overall picture of the extent that the Act represents value for money, the theory and examples from public bodies of the value for money provided by the Act make the case unequivocal.

### **Concluding remarks**

As part of its inquiry, the Committee may want to consider the issue of resources. In July 2023, the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee Review of the Welsh Commissioners made a recommendation (number 15) that "Welsh Government conducts post-legislative review of the legislation governing all Commissioners, including a review of the funding allocated to them, with an update provided to the Committee in due course". The Committee may want to consider this matter of funding given how relevant it is to many of the response in this submission relating to the impact of the WFG Act.

Finally, I urge the Committee to model good practice in involving citizens in the deliberations of this inquiry. Given the way in which the WFG Act was developed following the national conversation 'The Wales We Want,' and given that involvement is one of the five ways of working, it is important you hear from a range of people and organisations as part of the inquiry. Citizens have a stake in this legislation in a way that you do not see with other laws and I know there is significant interest in providing you with evidence.

I look forward to meeting with the Committee to expand on these points and share further insights from my work and from the Future Generations Report 2025. I am committed to working with you as much as required in your work to ensure the WFG Act is a powerful and practical tool for shaping a better future for Wales.

In the meantime, if you require any further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Derek Walker  
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Document is Restricted



**Ombwdsmon  
Ombudsman**  
Cymru • Wales

## **Consultation response: British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

Organisation name: Equality and Social Justice Committee

Submitted: 31 October 2025

As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), we have three main roles:

- We investigate complaints about public services.
- We consider complaints about councillors breaching the Code of Conduct.
- We drive systemic improvement of public services and standards of conduct in local government in Wales.

We are independent, impartial, fair and open to all who need us.  
Our service is free of charge.

[ombudsman.wales](https://ombudsman.wales)

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Thank you for inviting us to contribute evidence to your scrutiny of the British Sign Language (BSL) Bill.

## **Our process for handling of complaints from BSL users**

We want to make sure that we offer a fair and equal service to all. Some people may find it more difficult to complain than others and there are many ways in which we can help. This year, 86% of our complainants said that we are easy to contact.

While we could always offer reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to our service, since 2019 we have explicit powers to accept complaints other than in writing. Last year, this service was used by just over 160 people. We can now also more easily accept complaints in BSL.

Our nation-wide awareness research shows consistently that about three quarters of respondents know that we can accept complaints other than in writing. However, just over a half know that we can accept a complaint via British Sign Language (BSL). This shows that while the level of awareness of this option is generally good, but could still be improved. Therefore, we take opportunities to raise awareness of this power through our outreach and communications channels.

Our website features a page called 'How we can help you to use our service'. Within that page there is a section dedicated to support we can offer to service users who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment. It includes a link to the 'SignVideo' (interpreting service for BSL users).

In 2021/22, we took our first complaint in BSL. The same complainant approached us several times in the following years, also asking for BSL interpretation.

- **202105382 & 202303340** - Ms A complained about an ill-fitting dental brace which was causing her severe headaches. We took her complaint through a BSL signer and via video recording. Because Ms A had consulted a private dentist and her treatment was not provided by the NHS at all, we were not legally able to look further into her complaint. We explained our decision to her in a Zoom meeting (in addition to sending a written decision letter) and we advised her how to pursue her complaint with the private practitioner. The same person subsequently complained to us again, 18 months later, about an issue related to her social landlord. This shows confidence in our office and the accessibility of our service

Overall, since 2020, three complainants have either asked us for BSL interpretation or signalled that it may be required.

## Complaints about access to BSL interpretation

We interrogated our case records since 2020 and identified 12 cases which involved access to BSL interpretation. Of these cases, we upheld two:

- **202103248** – Ms A complained that Cafcass Cymru failed to provide her with appropriate support, to include access to a BSL interpreter. Cafcass informed us that Ms A’s complaint was out of time, and it was therefore unlikely it could investigate her concerns. However, we found that Ms A had faced communication barriers and obstacles caused by the pandemic, when trying to access appropriate timely support to raise her concerns. We sought and gained Cafcass’ agreement to exercise discretion under its Complaints Policy to accept and consider Ms A’s complaint, and to discuss her needs throughout the complaints process, in relation to reasonable adjustments and access to a BSL interpreter.
- **202308108** - Miss T complained about the care and treatment provided to her mother, Mrs Y, by Hywel Dda University Health Board. Miss T also complained about communication with herself, as a deaf carer, by the Health Board. At the commencement of the investigation the Health Board agreed to issue a further letter to Miss T apologising and recognising the barriers she had faced as a deaf carer. It also agreed to provide an update to the Ombudsman on the actions it was taking to address these communication issues. The investigation therefore focused on the care and treatment provided to Mrs Y during 2 hospital admissions. This specifically considered if there was a lack of reasonable adjustments, taking into consideration Mrs Y’s cognitive impairment, including support with fluid intake and involvement of Miss T as a carer.

Of the remaining 10 cases, we declined to investigate them on one of the following grounds:

- they were premature (the organisation has not had sufficient opportunity to respond)
- they were out of time (brought to us too late)
- they were out of our jurisdiction.

Overall, we must conclude that access to BSL interpretation features very rarely in our complaints. For context, we handle in the region of 3,000 duly made complaints about public services every year.

## Our role and provisions of the Bill

We welcome the guiding principle of the Bill to promote and facilitate the use of BSL in Wales. We strongly believe that no community should face barriers when accessing public services and complaints processes.

We note that the proposed position of a BSL adviser does not currently include any responsibility for the handling of complaints about non-compliance with the duties that would be introduced by the proposed Bill. This is different to the arrangements in place for the users of the Welsh language, who have a clear complaint route via the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner. Indeed, we note that while the original [Explanatory Memorandum](#) proposed the establishment of the BSL Commissioner, with responsibility for investigation of complaints, these proposals are not reflected in the Bill as introduced (July 2025).

We believe that the Bill or any guidance should offer more clarity on the options available to the BSL users who find that public services are not meeting their duties under the proposed legislation.

To confirm, **as the Ombudsman, we are the appropriate organisation for complaints from individuals experiencing injustice or hardship due to issues with accessibility of public services in Wales.** Public service providers in Wales are already under duties to ensure that their services are accessible and that they consider requests for reasonable adjustments for disabled service users. Furthermore, our statutory Model Complaints Policy and Guidance (which we have by now issued to all local councils and Welsh Health Boards as well as most Housing Associations in Wales) already specifies that complaints processes must be accessible. People can complain to us that services or complaints processes are not as accessible as they should be. Indeed, in January this year we issued [a thematic report](#), presenting a number of cases highlighting difficulties disabled people have experienced in accessing public services. As noted above, we have also received in the past some complaints raising concerns about availability of BSL interpretation. Better publicity, including as a result of the proposed Bill, could result in the BSL users approaching us with such complaints more often.

However,


- we are always very clear that **it is not our role to conclude that someone has been discriminated against.** In other words, we cannot make a finding of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. If this remedy is expected, we always clarify that it can only be achieved through the Courts. We cannot investigate a complaint when the complainant has such a remedy available to them in the Courts.

- we can look into complaints only when there are signs that the alleged failings had a negative effect on the complainant or the person they are complaining for. **We cannot look at matters that do not involve personal injustice or hardship.** We would therefore be unable to look into complaints that the Welsh Government or the listed bodies did not comply with their planning or reporting duties under the proposed Bill.

To ensure better access to justice for the BSL users, we would suggest that the Bill places a duty on the BSL adviser to prepare and issue guidance on the appropriate route for complaints about access to services by BSL users. The BSL adviser should be under a duty to consult on that guidance with our office, to ensure that our role is accurately reflected and that the guidance is aligned with our Model Complaints Policy and Guidance.

## Closing remarks

We would like to thank you again for the opportunity to submit our evidence. If you would like to discuss our response further, please let me know or contact our Head of Policy ([ania.rolewska@ombudsman.wales](mailto:ania.rolewska@ombudsman.wales)).



**Michelle Morris**

**Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

October 2025

# Agenda Item 3.2

## Julie Doyle RSLI

BSL/English Interpreter, Senior Practitioner,

Mentor, Assessor and Trainer/Teacher. CODA

### Welsh Government Consultation Response: BSL (British Sign Language) Bill : Interpreters in Wales.

#### 1. The number of BSL interpreters in Wales - are there enough to satisfy demand at present?

For accurate and up-to-date data on the number and demographics of BSL interpreters and translators in Wales, the Welsh Government should consult the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI), which holds relevant professional information and workforce statistics.

At present, there are not enough qualified BSL interpreters in Wales to meet demand in all aspects of Deaf people's lives.. However, simply increasing the number of interpreters is not a sustainable solution. Previous initiatives, such as BSL Futures, demonstrated that without proper legacy or succession planning, shortages soon re-emerge.

A sustainable approach requires the creation of a clear and supported career pathway — from trainee through to qualified interpreter, mentor, supervisor, senior practitioner, assessor, teacher/trainer, and researcher. This pathway should be actively promoted through Careers Wales, schools, colleges, and universities to encourage long-term workforce growth.

To ensure a robust pipeline, Wales must also invest in a skilled Deaf teaching workforce and ensure that BSL classes are widely available and recognised as a professional skill, not merely a hobby. BSL and interpreting should be recognised as legitimate career choices within the fields of linguistics and communication.

Free BSL classes should be prioritised for families of Deaf people, and financial support (such as Student Finance eligibility) should be made available for BSL learners progressing to Level 6 and interpreter diploma qualifications, which are currently cost-prohibitive.

The focus of this question should be: **“Is there sufficient supply to meet demand in public services?”** This distinction is important because interpreter demand extends well beyond the public sector — encompassing the arts, legal settings, education, employment (via the Access to Work scheme\*), and virtual interpreting services (VRI/VRS). This diversification of work opportunities reduces the pool of interpreters available for public service assignments, particularly within health and social care, where demand is often urgent, unpredictable, and last-minute. For financial and professional stability, interpreters prioritise advance bookings and are unlikely to reserve diary space solely for short-notice work.

Interpreters may choose to work with Deaf professionals through employment support schemes, (Access To Work) as this provides regular and predictable work. This further reduces availability for short-notice assignments within the public sector. The Access to

Work scheme remains unfit for purpose, creating barriers for Deaf professionals and placing additional strain on interpreter availability. See below in ‘barriers’ section.

A balanced approach is essential — flooding the market with newly qualified interpreters risks underemployment and lower quality, while too few interpreters creates accessibility gaps. Freelancers need regular, predictable work to sustain income; but still want to be flexible enough to be there for the community at short notice, it is a hard balance to strike at the moment.

An additional question that should be considered relates to the **demand for BSL Translators**. BSL Translators are qualified Deaf professionals who translate written English content into BSL. Public services will increasingly need to communicate key information, such as health advice and public messaging — directly to the Deaf community in BSL. This will require a skilled and sustainable pool of BSL Translators.

It is recommended that the Welsh Government consult ASLI for accurate data on the current number of freelance BSL Translators in Wales. Succession planning is also essential to ensure future capacity. Translators should have access to structured training opportunities in Wales and could be trained alongside interpreter cohorts through a well-designed, coordinated programme.

## **2. What impact would the Bill have on interpreter demand?**

The Bill is likely to increase demand significantly across all sectors. Interpreters’ diaries would fill months in advance, reducing flexibility for short-notice or emergency work in health, social care, and justice settings — areas that directly affect lives.

Without careful workforce planning and advance booking systems, there is a risk of interpreter burnout and service gaps. Sustainable workforce growth, supported by proper planning and funding, is essential to meet increased demand without compromising quality or wellbeing. Consultation with interpreters within the public sector is essential. Interpreter input can provide valuable insight into what is practical and sustainable within the profession for example, regarding terms and conditions, workload expectations, and service delivery models. Interpreters can also offer unique perspectives that help shape policies which are both realistic and effective in meeting the needs of Deaf service users.

Again there will be greater demand placed upon Translators to provide public notices and information in BSL in addition to their current workload.

## **3. What are the main obstacles facing the interpreting profession?**

The interpreting profession currently faces several structural challenges:

- Lack of diversity – The workforce is predominantly white and female, with limited representation from other backgrounds.
- Ageing profession – Many interpreters are expected to retire within 15–20 years, with insufficient new entrants to replace them.
- Limited succession planning – Few structured pathways or incentives exist for career development.

- Perceived as a “helping” profession rather than a linguistics-based, cognitively demanding career.
- Financial barriers – Training and qualification costs are high, with limited funding support. Freelance work that requires last minute bookings is not sustainable, advance bookings are preferred.
- Quality concerns – Fast-tracked or poorly supported training leads to inconsistent quality and skill levels.
- Lack of Deaf leadership – Deaf professionals must be paid and empowered to lead on training, assessment, and curriculum development.

Additionally, public service booking systems are inconsistent and often fail to confirm interpreters properly. Misunderstandings between “requesting” and “booking” interpreters lead to cancelled or missed appointments particularly in health settings.

Additional barriers are that The Access to Work scheme is currently not fit for purpose. Ongoing payment delays and administrative issues have led many interpreters to withdraw from employment-related interpreting. This has created tension between Deaf employees and interpreters, as Access to Work frequently fails to make timely payments, consult appropriately with interpreters, or provide financial reliability. As a result, some interpreters have experienced financial loss or debt. Conversely, interpreting for Deaf employees can provide regular and stable work for interpreters. However, this reduces their capacity to take on last-minute or ad hoc public service assignments. It is appreciated that Access To Work is not a devolved issue, however it does have an impact upon interpreter availability and stress load.

## **5. What can be done to attract more people into the profession?**

Attraction to the profession requires:

- A clear, well-publicised career structure showing progression routes and professional recognition.
- Targeted recruitment in schools and universities, especially for students interested in languages, performance, communication, ethics or social engagement.
- Improved financial support, including bursaries or student loans.
- Promotion of diversity and visibility of interpreters from varied backgrounds.
- Accurate portrayal of the profession as intellectually stimulating, rewarding, and linguistically rich.

Raising awareness of the job’s benefits and stability, when properly supported, will make it a more viable career option. As most interpreters work on a freelance basis, funding may be required to promote the profession and support workforce development. However, it should be recognised that such promotional and outreach activities take time away from interpreters’ everyday work, which may further impact service availability in the short term.

## **5. Is there sufficient training available and what are the pathways?**

There are limited interpreter training options in Wales, with most advanced courses based in England. Developing a Wales-based interpreter diploma or university programme would improve accessibility and retention. However many students may well be based elsewhere in

the UK to attend Wales based courses. We would want to attract home grown interpreters or those who wish to stay in Wales. BSL Futures saw many leave Wales to work elsewhere.

Training must be Deaf-led, culturally authentic, and supported by skilled mentors and supervisors. Investment in the Deaf teaching workforce is fundamental to ensuring language and cultural quality in interpreter education. Mentorship should be an integral part of qualification pathways.

To establish a sustainable and continuous pipeline of qualified BSL interpreters, the first and most critical step is to strengthen and expand the Deaf BSL teaching workforce. High-quality BSL teaching must be accessible, well-resourced, and led by Deaf professionals who are appropriately remunerated and provided with job security.

BSL should be offered and recognised as a mainstream language subject — similar to Welsh — with provision available during normal working hours, not only as an evening or hobby class.

Deaf BSL teachers should be employed across a range of contexts, including:

- Fully funded family BSL programmes for families of Deaf children;
- General public BSL classes;
- Workplace and public sector training (including Deaf awareness and equality training); and
- Interpreter training and education programmes.
- Qualify Deaf Teachers to work with in Education settings for all ages.

Without sustained investment in Deaf-led BSL teaching, it will not be possible to produce a consistent, high-quality cohort of interpreters in Wales.

## **6. What should the Bill include to improve Deaf people’s access to interpreters?**

The Bill should include an “active offer” principle for BSL access.

The Bill and its associated strategy and guidance should not focus solely on access to interpreters and translators. There appears to be an assumption that increasing the number of interpreters will resolve the challenges faced by the Deaf community; however, this addresses only one part of a much wider and more complex picture. Interpreter access is indeed vital in certain contexts, for example, in healthcare and social care, but true equality begins much earlier, with access to BSL from birth for Deaf children and their families. Also a much wider understanding is needed of how systems and organisations need to adhere to their anticipatory duty to provide accessible information to the Deaf community in BSL.

More clarity is needed about what promoting and facilitating means. I understand this needs to be fleshed out in the National Strategy and guidance. It would be wise to consult with interpreters (ASLI) on any strategies to gather feasibility of the said guidance.

Summary:

Rapidly increasing interpreter numbers through fast-track routes is not a sustainable solution; it is merely a short-term fix. The focus must instead be on long-term career planning and the development of a strong Deaf BSL teaching workforce. Deaf teachers, whose first language and lived experience are rooted in BSL and Deaf culture, should be supported, valued, and properly resourced to expand the workforce and ensure quality and authenticity in training.

In general Public Services should:

- Provide clear, simple ways for Deaf people to request interpreters (including online BSL options for emergency scenarios or simple queries).
- Publicise booking routes through Deaf networks, not just institutional websites.
- Flag BSL users in NHS systems to ensure interpreter provision is built into appointment scheduling.
- Offer flexible appointment dates/times to secure interpreter availability before confirming bookings.
- Older Deaf people must be supported to use new digital systems to request interpreters, ensuring accessibility across generations.
- Consult directly with interpreters within the public sector to identify practical solutions to issues of demand and supply, to consider terms and conditions, and support effective workforce and service planning.

Addressing interpreter shortages in Wales requires more than recruitment. A strategic, long-term investment in Deaf education, interpreter training, BSL teaching workforce planning, and public service interpreter booking system reform is essential. Interpreting must be recognised and supported as a professional, linguistic, and cultural career, underpinned by fair pay, sustainable workloads, and Deaf leadership.

Julie Doyle  
via email

16 October 2025

Dear Julie

### **British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

Thank you very much for the interpretation services you provided recently at a meeting of the Equality and Social Justice Committee in which Members undertook scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill. The Committee was very grateful for your services and Members found it informative to observe BSL interpretation live and in action.

As part of its work scrutinising the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill the Committee has taken evidence from a number of witnesses. Many have suggested that there is a scarcity of British Sign Language interpreters and that could pose a barrier to implementation.

As a professional British Sign Language interpreter working in Wales, the Committee would be most interested to hear your thoughts on the Bill, particularly how you think the Bill will impact British Sign Language interpreters and the Deaf community in Wales.

The Committee would specifically welcome your thoughts on:

1. The number of BSL interpreters in Wales - are there enough to satisfy demand at present?
2. What would the impact of the Bill have on the demand of BSL interpreters?
3. Whether there are any obstacles facing your profession?
4. What can be done to entice more BSL interpreters into the profession?
5. Whether there is sufficient training available and what are the pathways into the profession?
6. Whether there is anything that the Bill should include to improve the Deaf community's access to BSL interpreters?

Unfortunately the timescales for legislative scrutiny are extremely tight and we would be grateful for your thoughts by 28 October.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Rathbone MS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice  
Committee, Senedd Cymru

*Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.*

# Agenda Item 3.3

Stephen Brattan-Wilson  
Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI)  
Regional Representative (Wales)

20<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Equality and Social Justice Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff

Via email

Dear Jenny,

## **RE: British Sign Language Bill (Wales)**

As the current regional contact for the Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Translators in Wales (ASLI), I have been asked to respond to the questions you raised with colleagues that have been working alongside the various committees scrutinising the BSL Bill.

While my colleagues are providing you with individual responses, they also felt it would be appropriate for a collective response from a member organisation and the wider profession that also includes non-ASLI members, such as colleagues who belong to VLP (Visual Language Professionals).

I write to you in my role as the local ASLI representative, with the board's approval, but also as a qualified and registered BSL/English interpreter, senior practitioner and a teacher/assessor of trainee interpreters.

I will address each question in turn, occasionally referencing work/research done already in collaboration with Welsh Government at the BSL Stakeholder Group. I am sure you are aware that soon they will be publishing a BSL 'route map' setting out a number of short- and long-term activities to improve the lives of the sign language using community here in Wales.

I hope you find these answers useful in your ongoing scrutiny of the BSL Bill.

- 1. The number of BSL interpreters in Wales - are there enough to satisfy demand at present?**

Objectively speaking, there are not enough BSL language professionals in Wales to satisfy demand – this includes BSL/English interpreters, BSL translators, Deafblind interpreters and intralingual (relay) interpreters.

There has been a decrease in numbers in the last 3 years, from 55 to 54, despite new people entering the profession in Wales. The number of interpreters in Wales is just under 4% of the total population of interpreters in the UK. Approximately two thirds of interpreting/translation colleagues are based in South Wales, with the remainder in North Wales. Mid Wales has 1 interpreter.

There are 6 qualified translators in Wales, working from English to BSL, however 2 of them are not currently registered or working as such.

While agency work, managed by organisations such as WITS, can cover interpreting for public services with a high completion rate, many Deaf people and public facing organisations often find it difficult to find interpreters for their respective needs. This ranges from professional Deaf people in employment, to people in the community accessing services, needing interpreters on an emergency basis in health or social care or in rural settings.

Arguably, and with respect, the questions here should be: are there enough highly skilled and experienced interpreters/translators working in a *range* of domains and, also, is the workforce representative of the diversity of the BSL using community? The answer to both these is: no.

Currently, the 54 interpreters (not all of whom are full time) that cover the entirety of Wales are consistently trying to fulfil any and all work, but many might avoid public facing, high level, high demand work in favour of private, low strain, low stress work. There is a place for both of these types of work, but historically low strain, low stress work would be covered by trainees, freeing experienced colleagues to undertake the more high demand work.

South Wales simply does not have the throughput of trainees into the profession to allow this to happen. In North Wales there are a small number of trainees moving through training on an annual basis given the proximity to the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) where interpreter training is currently available.

As additional context: trainees are limited to the type of work that they can undertake and cannot accept work in criminal justice, legal domains, mental health, social services and most medical settings. They cannot undertake work that involves a diagnosis or consent for treatment/surgery or where there might be life-altering decisions to be made. This means that these high strain jobs are covered by experienced interpreters, of which there are relatively low numbers.

Furthermore, since 2020 there has been a marked rise in the number of online video remote interpreting agencies. Many colleagues now work either part or full time for these VRI services, meaning that the availability for face-to-face interpreting is actually diminishing.

In terms of representation, the majority of the workforce is white, heterosexual, middle-class women between the ages of 35 and 60. There are two interpreters of colour in the entire country, 1 male and 1 female. Of the 54 interpreters in Wales, there are only 9 men. These workforce demographics do not reflect the demographics of the Wales Deaf BSL community, particularly in relation to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race and religion. We are also not spread out equally across the geography of Wales.

## **2. What would the impact of the Bill have on the demand of BSL interpreters?**

It would increase the demand for all BSL language professionals, not just BSL/English interpreters. We anticipate the number of assignment requests to go up in all areas, particularly in translation work (from English into BSL).

We have made it clear to Welsh Government that we do not believe a fast-track approach to increasing the numbers of BSL professionals is the correct approach, despite other non-interpreting organisations arguing the case.

A previous attempt at flooding the market with more interpreters, via the BSL Futures Project, was *partially* successful at its completion. However, of the 30 individuals trained via the programme, less than a third remain actively working in Wales.

It is our experience that a structured training programme is the only way forward, one that systematically and gradually increases the number at a sustainable rate. We argue that the shortest amount of time one might need to train an interpreter/translator is, at minimum, 18-24 months, once they have the requisite BSL and English qualifications in place as well as some experience of interpreting/translating. Those who attend training without any interpreting/translation experience (e.g. after a career change) may well need further development opportunities before they can qualify.

## **3. Whether there are any obstacles facing your profession?**

Specifically for Wales, the obstacles facing the profession (and barriers to entering the profession) are:

- a) There is no investment in Deaf people, and specifically children, to a) be educated or trained in their own language and b) then, as adults, deliver BSL classes as a bona fide teaching career.
- b) BSL classes (Levels 1 through 6) *may* eventually generate a very small percentage of learners who move into the interpreting profession. Most people stop learning BSL between levels 1 and 3.
- c) There has been a steady decline in the number of available BSL classes; this impacts on the number of people training in the language to eventually consider a career.
- d) In Wales, there are no training centres or academic routes into the profession.
- e) As a direct consequence of the above there is very little throughput of trainees into Wales, particularly in the south, to counteract the number of people leaving the profession, retiring, moving out of Wales etc.
- f) BSL/English interpreting or translation is never promoted as a first career of choice. Most people fall into it as a second or third career, often later in life.
- g) Geography is often an issue – colleagues face driving from one end of the country to the other to undertake work. There is also geographic inequality faced by Deaf people who do not live in South Wales, or in the more populated areas of North Wales, where nearly all interpreters are based.
- h) Issues facing colleagues could also include (but are not limited to) vicarious trauma, burnout, lack of available support (nearly all of us are freelance and self-employed), lack of local training opportunities, fees not rising in line with inflation, and a general lack of awareness of the role of BSL communication professionals.
- i) There are very few colleagues who are qualified to provide professional supervision, a tool that supports longevity of career and safety in the profession.
- j) Public sector awareness of the methods to procure communication professionals continues to be sporadic – requests are often made last minute. There is often an assumption that because a *request* for an interpreter has been made that one has been *booked*, which is often not the case. Interpreting colleagues then often get blamed for ‘not turning up’ when, in fact, the booking has not been confirmed.

- k) There are ongoing, systemic issues within DWP around the administration and granting of Access to Work funding. New applications for interpreter support currently take 30 weeks to process, and renewal requests often result in cuts to existing grant funding, making it even more difficult for Deaf people to secure interpreting provision. Many interpreters turn down bookings that are funded by AtW as payments are often delayed, invoices lost, budgets administered incorrectly or inappropriately with, seemingly, a complete lack of understanding around the needs of Deaf people who use BSL.
- l) The availability of BSL communication professionals is not always compatible with primary and secondary health appointment booking systems. Quite often appointments are sent out, but an interpreter is not available, and therefore the onus is on the patient and the interpreter to mediate back and forth to arrange a mutually convenient date, often resulting in appointments being delayed. There is an assumption in health that because an appointment is made for a Deaf person an interpreter will always be available.
- m) There is no route to qualifying for individuals working between Welsh and BSL. Currently, colleagues will 'self certify' that they have the requisite language skill level, but as there is no method of assessment to ascertain the correct standard is being met, there is no recourse for clients to know that accuracy in interpretation is upheld. NRCPD (the regulatory body) has raised this as an issue with the BSL Stakeholder group and also the Welsh Government, but until there is an assessment and qualification pathway created, colleagues can only be certified to work between BSL and English, not Welsh.

#### **4. What can be done to entice more BSL interpreters into the profession?**

- a) Provide funding for training. Spoken language interpreting training at universities can be funded via Student Finance. This is not the case for sign language interpreting/translation courses, where learners have to pay privately.
- b) To reiterate, we do **not** believe a fast-track approach to flooding the market is appropriate.
- c) Promote the profession as a career of choice and one that is not a 'helping' profession. The BSL Route Map makes reference to working with organisations such as Careers Wales but there will need to be involvement from ASLI and the wider interpreting/translation profession.

- d) Work with NRCPD to investigate the option to also qualify as BSL/Welsh interpreters, as well as BSL/English.
- e) Continue to raise awareness of BSL as a language in its own right, with parity of esteem to that of spoken languages, specifically Welsh and English.
- f) Leverage political ties to improve non-devolved functions such as Access to Work, so that Deaf BSL users are more able to utilise their budgets to secure access to interpreting/translation and that colleagues are more likely to accept work funded by AtW, secure in the knowledge that they will be paid on time.

## **5. Whether there is sufficient training available and what are the pathways into the profession?**

Training situation in Wales:

- a) Currently, training provision for those wishing to join the interpreting/translation profession is non-existent in Wales. There are currently no training centres running courses in Wales. There are no universities delivering degree level courses in sign language interpreting/translation.
- b) The nearest training centres are in Bristol or Warrington, both of which are run by privately owned and managed training centres. The nearest universities are UCLAN and Wolverhampton. We are aware of one student currently attending Heriot-Watt University in Scotland.
- c) Welsh colleagues qualified to teach and assess the diploma in interpreting/translation all do so in England.

Pathways into the profession can normally be identified as follows:

- a) Training pathways for individuals in Wales consist solely of attending a training centre or university in England or Scotland.
- b) Communication support workers (untrained, unregulated individuals working in education with deaf children, often with poor BSL language skills) may eventually decide to train as interpreters. Occasionally their training will be paid for by their employer, though most pay privately.

- c) Deaf people will, as a second or third career option, become intralingual interpreters or BSL translators.
- d) Individuals from various 'helping professions' will re-train as interpreters (nurses, social workers, support workers etc).
- e) A small number of hearing individuals born into Deaf families will undertake training, having lived in the community their entire lives.
- f) A very small number of learners who have progressed from Level 1 to Level 6 in BSL will then move into interpreter training as a natural progression.

**6. Whether there is anything that the Bill should include to improve the Deaf community's access to BSL interpreters?**

- a) We feel that the Bill and subsequent strategies and plans should **not** focus exclusively on access to interpreters/translators. We've seen mention many times in committee that 'access to interpreters will resolve many of the problems Deaf people face'. While that may be true in *some* situations (e.g. emergency access to health care) access to interpreters is one small piece of a very large jigsaw, starting with access to BSL from birth for deaf children and their families, in line with the spirit of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- b) There should be mention that the BSL Bill should not be seen as a workaround for failing to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. The BSL Bill should be seen to work alongside the Equality Act in a complementary fashion. However, given that language is not considered a protected characteristic in the Equality Act, perhaps there could be some provision included in the Bill for citizens of Wales to hold public bodies to account for failing to provide BSL when required.
- c) There should be an Active Offer of BSL as is currently provided for the Welsh Language.
- d) There should be explicit mention in the Bill about how deaf children and their families must be provided opportunities to learn BSL as a first and preferred language, which in turn will provide mechanisms for BSL users to work with and access interpreters in the future.
- e) We feel that the wording of what a listed body should do in relation to 'promoting and facilitating the use of BSL in the exercise of its functions' could

be made more explicit. Currently the wording might allow, for example, a local authority to simply say 'we have promoted the use of BSL through a line on our website and suggest that people request an interpreter if one is needed'. This would not be in the spirit of the Bill. There needs to be more concrete direction on what a public body must do, with examples provided.


- f) Timelines could be shortened between the Act coming into force and the publication of BSL plans. Currently, the Bill states that there will be 18 months from the enforcement of the Act to publish a strategy and then a further 12 months after that for public bodies to publish their BSL plans, totalling 30 months before work can actively start on improving the lives of BSL using citizens.
- g) We are disappointed to see that the role of the BSL advisor could not be strengthened to that of BSL Commissioner, in line with the Welsh Language Commissioner who has powers to investigate breaches of standards and take legal action.  
We do acknowledge that part of the advisor's role could be investigating how to increase the number of people entering the interpreting/translation profession, in line with the BSL Route Map.
- h) We argue that, while we agree that the BSL advisor should be "...able to communicate effectively in and uses BSL...", they should also be a Deaf person, as they have that lived experience, would provide credibility and have the full support of the community. This post should not be held by a hearing person, in the same way that the Welsh Language commissioner's post would not be held by someone who cannot speak Welsh. To suggest a Deaf person should hold the role is not discriminatory. Appointing a non-Deaf person to the role would disenfranchise the entire community, as well as the language professionals working with them.
- i) In appointing the BSL advisor, we recommend that the panel consists majorly of Deaf BSL users who can *legitimately* advise on whether someone is appropriate for the role. The advisor should not be appointed by a panel consisting solely of hearing, non-BSL using individuals. Appropriately qualified and skilled BSL/English interpreters must be made available for the interview/appointment process, and perhaps could even contribute to the make-up of the panel and/or subsequent team (subject to consultation with the BSL community).
- j) In relation to the section on the BSL advisor and the point: "If a listed public body decides not to comply with a request under subsection (7), it must

explain why to the BSL adviser in writing.” This appears to be a loophole that could be tightened.

- k) The Bill could make it clear that it recognises BSL as having parity of esteem with that of spoken languages and is recognised as one of Wales’ indigenous languages.
- l) The list of public bodies as currently stated needs to be increased dramatically to incorporate a wider range of organisations, including all Wales Government-sponsored bodies.
- m) In relation to pay and remuneration for the BSL advisor, the current wording is ‘may pay’. We feel this should be paid employment for a highly skilled and knowledgeable Deaf BSL user and, therefore, the wording should be strengthened to ‘will pay’.
- n) In relation to how a public body “...describes how it intends to follow guidance issued under section 3, or *explains why it does not intend to do so...*” the latter half of this sentence suggests an automatic ‘get out of jail free’ card. We feel the statement should remove the words “or explains why it does not intend to do so” thereby instructing public bodies that they will publish a plan that describes how it intends to follow guidance issued under section 3.
- o) We would also ask what recourse is available to individuals to hold public bodies to account, should they fail to comply with the requirements as laid out by the Act?

We hope you find these answers useful to the questions you have posed. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you require more information.

Yours truly,



**Stephen Brattan-Wilson**

BSL/English Interpreter (MASLI), Interpreting Teacher, Assessor and Senior Practitioner

**Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI)  
Regional Representative (Wales)**

# Agenda Item 3.4

Jane Hutt 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/522/25

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Equality and Social Justice Committee

23 October 2025

Dear Jenny,

## **British Sign Language (Wales) Bill – Stage 1 Scrutiny**

Thank you for your request for additional information, following my evidence session at the Equality and Social Justice Committee on 13 October 2025. Please find below my responses to the additional points raised.

### **Action point one:**

At paragraph 234, Sioned Williams asked:

*“We have heard from some witnesses very strong views on whether the BSL adviser should be a deaf BSL signer. However, we've also had evidence that has suggested that perhaps having that as a requirement could be legally problematic. So, what are your views on that?”*

At paragraph 236 the Cabinet Secretary mentioned that this is something Welsh Government might be able to provide further information on.

**ESJ Committee - It would be helpful to receive a note setting out the Welsh Government's view on the competence of requiring the National Adviser to be a Deaf BSL Signer.**

### **Response**

The Bill is not a Welsh Government Bill and therefore questions about changes to its drafting are ultimately matters for the Member in charge. In addition, the Welsh Government is unable to disclose legal advice. Nevertheless, to assist the committee, there appears to be no legal bar to the Bill requiring that the BSL adviser be deaf. The attention of the committee is drawn, in particular, to section 13(3) of and paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 to the Equality Act 2010.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru)  
[@gov.wales](https://twitter.com/Correspondence.Jane.Hutt)

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.

Regarding legislative competence, the Welsh Government considers that a requirement that the BSL adviser be deaf would be within the legislative competence of the Senedd for the same reasons that the other provisions of the Bill would be.

**Action point two:**

At paragraph 275, Jenny Rathbone asked:

*“I'd just like to ask whether there is any room for adding the beginning of training for more interpreters into the financial impact assessment. Because all the evidence we've heard is telling us that there is a genuine shortage of interpreters and therefore that will be a major barrier to being able to implement the ambitions of the Bill”*

**At paragraph 279, the Cabinet Secretary mentioned that this is something Welsh Government might be able to provide further information on. Again, please can you confirm whether Welsh Government has any further information in this regard.**

**Response**

Data on existing BSL/ Interpreting workforce has been provided by the Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Translators (ASLI). ASLI statistics (July 2025):

- 1,558 Registered Sign Language Interpreters, 54 are based in Wales
- Qualified translators: 5, with 3 currently registered with the regulatory body and accepting work
- Intralingual (relay) interpreters: 4 (3 of those are also translators)

The shortage of BSL translators is a challenge that needs to be addressed, however members of the BSL Stakeholder Group have been clear that any plan to address the shortage should be done in a pragmatic and staged approach. The recommendations from the Group [were published on the Welsh Government website](#) on the 30 September and include a short-term recommendations on the BSL interpreting and translation workforce to map out BSL within the existing teaching workforce to understand levels of BSL provision.

Welsh Government is developing a BSL route map that will set out the initial actions needed to promote and facilitate the use of BSL and to improve outcomes for the deaf BSL signing community in Wales. The short-term actions within this route map will be informed by the Group's recommendations. Welsh Government are working with the BSL Stakeholder Group to develop this. Short term recommendations in the Route Map will be delivered within with a target for completion of 18 months and inform longer term work in relation to the BSL interpreting and translation workforce.

The Group also recommend a long-term recommendation on the BSL interpreting and translation workforce. This involves two aspects:

- Mapping and researching the existing career barriers to becoming and progressing as a BSL interpreter or translator; and
- Working with Careers Wales and other appropriate groups to consider ways in which a career in interpreting or translation could be promoted.

Discussions within the BSL Stakeholder Group highlighted that recommendations must focus on addressing both the existing gaps within BSL interpretation and translation, and the barriers in entering the BSL interpreting/ translation profession to increase the number of people entering the profession. The long-term recommendations should inform the development of the national BSL strategy, BSL guidance and BSL plans. The Bill's emphasis on co-production and stakeholder engagement ensures that implementation will be shaped by the lived experiences of deaf BSL signers, helping to develop meaningful and proportionate action.

Should you require any further clarification, I would be happy to assist.

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

Llais,  
Adeiladau'r Coron,  
Parc Cathays,  
Caerdydd  
CF10 3NQ

Llais,  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ



31 October 2025

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair  
Equality and Social Justice Committee  
Senedd Cymru

Sent via email only via: [SeneddEquality@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddEquality@senedd.wales)

Dear Chair

### **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (WALES) BILL**

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2025, asking for information from Llais about the accessibility of complaints procedures, and in particular British Sign Language.

I attach our response to your questions. We hope you find this information helpful. Please let us know if we can provide any further assistance at this time.

Yours sincerely

*J A Thomas*

Alyson Thomas  
Chief Executive

## **British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

### **Llais response to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's request for information**

Thank you for inviting Llais to contribute to the Committee's scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill.

As the independent body that reflects the views and represents the interests of people living in Wales in their National Health Service (NHS) and social care services, we welcome the opportunity to share our perspective and the experiences of those we support, and to answer the questions the committee has asked of us.

We work with people and communities across all parts of Wales, making sure that everyone's voice can be heard and used to inform the planning, design, development, and delivery of health and social care services for all. We achieve this through community engagement, our complaints advocacy service, and representations to decision-makers.

### **Our commitment to accessible services**

We provide our services and deliver our functions on a needs-based, person-led basis. We are committed to making sure that people's voices are heard and acted upon, regardless of their communication needs.

When a BSL user approaches us, we work to understand and provide our services using their preferred method of communication, including arranging qualified BSL interpreters or using video relay services. This may be for an engagement event, supporting a person to raise their complaint about health and/or social services, or dealing with a concern about Llais itself.

We have established policies and commitments to make sure our activities and services are accessible to all people and communities in Wales, including d/Deaf people and BSL users. For example:

- Our accessibility statement<sup>1</sup> lets people know how we approach our activities in a way that enables everyone to get involved
- Our Complaints Advocacy Policy ensures free, independent, and confidential support to individuals who want support to raise concerns about health and/or social services. This includes access to BSL interpreters and alternative formats.
- Our Communication Strategy (2024–2027) outlines inclusive, trauma-informed communication practices, with a focus on amplifying the voices of all communities.
- We encourage feedback to improve accessibility.
- We have recently agreed to offer an introductory BSL course to all our people in public-facing roles, to be rolled out across Wales, as well as offering the opportunity to a selection of our people to achieve a recognised BSL qualification.

We provide information in a range of formats, offer video and remote interpreting where appropriate, and work closely with people to ensure their needs are met at every stage.

Where someone wishes to make a complaint about Llais, we offer and facilitate people to communicate their concerns in the way that works best for them, including BSL where appropriate.

We are committed to meeting the renewed Accessible Communication and Information Standards (ACIS) and the requirements of the new Listening to People regulations.

Considering the changes to the NHS complaints system in April 2026 we recently contacted Welsh Government colleagues specifically to seek advice on how we can improve our responsiveness for people with additional communication and information needs who have a formal complaint with an NHS body or Local Authority, and how we might better align our approach with the frameworks used by those services.

We believe that using the same standards and frameworks as health and social services is important as these complaints are about the services they provide.

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<sup>1</sup> [Llais Accessibility Statement | Llais](#)

Our Customer Records Management (CRM) system helps us identify people's communication needs, such as BSL support. We have recorded over 150 instances where BSL or the word d/Deaf has been mentioned, though this may include multiple actions relating to our support for an individual raising a single complaint, or engagement about a particular matter.

We have received feedback from people who appreciate the inclusive approaches our staff take. For example, a recent email from a d/Deaf parent attending a play session at a Children's Centre in West Wales described how one of our Llais staff members confidently used British Sign Language (BSL) to greet and engage them. The parent wrote:

'I am Deaf and wear two hearing aids... the worker sat down and signed good morning, they knew it wasn't quite correct and tried again and got it right and then signed how are you? ... I was very happy to have that added into my day... I just couldn't believe that someone was confident and comfortable enough to try without asking if I used BSL first. You should be very proud to have them working for you. They made me feel comfortable to talk about some issues I've had with access to healthcare as a Deaf person. To have someone come and ask about experiences with health care in the area and for them to be so inclusive, I think is amazing to have.'

This feedback demonstrates the positive impact of our people having even basic BSL skills and d/Deaf awareness, and the importance of inclusive, proactive engagement. It also highlights the value of our commitment to rolling out introductory BSL training to our people in public-facing roles.

This video available at the link below summarises our complaints advocacy service and highlights some of the challenges faced by one BSL client, Gemma (2:40 onwards):

<https://youtu.be/K-6qwPMQEag?si=t6QyDh1Emjuv6l5w>.

## **What we hear about BSL in health and social services**

We set out below details of the issues we have picked up about the use of BSL in health and social services, often through our complaints advocacy service.

## **Barriers and challenges**

A major barrier we often hear about is the shortage of interpreters. We have also experienced this as an organisation.

The Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) is the main provider for interpretation and translation services offered by NHS and local authorities when dealing with health and social care complaints in Wales. Welsh Government colleagues have informed us that BSL is consistently among the top 5 requested languages each month. Llais does not currently have access to the WITS service.

The introduction of the new NHS complaints system 'Listening to People' from April 2026 will introduce mandatory listening meetings and a greater emphasis on early resolution.

This is positive for people, but it also means that BSL users will have at least 2 new points of contact with NHS bodies, each of which must be accessible and appropriately supported by qualified interpreters.

For Llais, this also means additional contact with the person making a complaint if they are using our complaints advocacy service, both to help them understand the process and to support them before and after listening meetings.

This may double the number of interactions where interpreter support is required, both with NHS bodies and with Llais as their complaints advocate.

We are concerned that without access to a responsive Deaf BSL interpretation service with more available interpreters, we and NHS bodies will struggle to meet the new 5 and 10-day deadlines within the new 'Listening to People' complaints system.

## **Complaints data and themes**

Since we started our work in April 2023, we have supported some people to raise BSL related concerns through our complaints advocacy service. These concerns have often involved delays or difficulties in arranging interpreters for listening meetings or discussions about complaints.

These cases have been a small yet growing area (particularly in the Gwent region) spanning both health and social services, with the overarching theme being the difficulty in accessing and communicating within the service.

Communicating with GPs has been reported to us as particularly challenging. The reliance on a technologically based interpretation service, lack of knowledge of local variations in sign language (particularly by interpreters based outside Wales), and technical issues during the links have been identified as recurring challenges to accessing services.

### **Data and summary of complaints about health and social services regarding access to BSL**

- We have provided support through our complaints advocacy service in 20 cases that mention BSL or Deaf-related communication barriers as central to the complaint. Some complaints may span more than one service.
- Complaints span GP practices (8 cases), hospitals (3 cases), social services (3 cases), and outpatient appointments such as physio (6 cases) and dentistry (1 case).
- Common issues include refusal to provide face-to-face interpreters, reliance on unsuitable video platforms, inaccessible booking systems, lack of d/Deaf awareness, and inappropriate reliance on family members for interpretation.

Our complaint advocates also report wider hearing related issues that may not be specifically relating to BSL, and these include people having trouble in accessing services such NHS 111 and making GP appointments when they cannot be made in person.

### **Case studies with complainant quotes**

**Case study 1:** GP surgery refusal to provide a face-to-face BSL interpreter

“Please help me tell them all I need a face-to-face interpreter for all my appointments. The iPad is not suitable for me. I only see through one eye, and it keeps freezing and the interpreters use signs I don’t understand.”

**Case study 2:** Loss of accessible communication channel

“I feel that they are taking away my independence in being able to communicate with them... I cannot use the phone at all, and even the online app is pretty much useless and inaccessible as there is no way of requesting a BSL Interpreter at the time of booking an appointment.”

### **Case study 3: Inadequate BSL support in hospital**

The BSL interpreter states that the patient lacks full capacity... and requires daily BSL services to support her communication with the whole team, not just for therapies.”

### **Case study 4: Social services failing to provide BSL interpreters**

She wants to complain that the social workers are not using BSL interpreters for every visit... and when the BSL interpreter they usually use is not available... they do not use a substitute and instead make her wait.

### **Case study 5: Missed appointments and lack of communication**

“Together with a booked BSL interpreter, we waited about an hour... before we got news... that she was not being brought to the Gwent.”

We hear that these challenges are sometimes compounded in the NHS because the existing Putting Things Right complaint process is primarily conducted in writing, which can exclude BSL users from fully participating in their own care and complaints.

## **Our wider engagement and communication functions**

Recent feedback from our engagement with people and communities outside of our complaints advocacy service illustrates similar ongoing barriers for users of BSL as those have heard through our complaints advocacy service.

For example, several d/Deaf patients in Cwmbran have struggled to access GP appointments due to systems that rely on telephone or complex online forms, which are not always accessible or available in BSL. While some GPs have agreed to accept email queries, this is not a consistent or equitable solution, particularly for urgent appointments or for users of BSL who are not confident in written English.

## **Organisational learning and next steps**

We use feedback, both positive and negative, to learn and to drive improvement. For example, the positive experiences shared with us has reinforced our commitment to BSL and d/Deaf awareness training for staff. We are also working to improve our data capture and are seeking advice

from Welsh Government colleagues on aligning our approach with health and social services.

### **Reflections and recommendations**

We agree that easy, timely access to appropriate interpreters is now more important than ever, given the upcoming changes to the NHS complaints system and the increased number of required contacts.

We would welcome further discussion on developing a shared framework for access to, and monitoring of, interpreter provision, and making sure that people with hearing loss and users of BSL can participate fully and equally in the complaints process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute. We are happy to provide further information or discuss these issues in more detail.

Llais Cymru

by email: [enquiries@llaiscymru.org](mailto:enquiries@llaiscymru.org)

16 October 2025

Dear Llais Cymru

### British Sign Language (Wales) Bill

The [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#) is undertaking scrutiny of the [British Sign Language \(Wales\) Bill](#).

As part of its work in this area, the Committee has taken evidence from witnesses, some of whom have suggested that it is difficult for Deaf people in Wales to access public services. Although due in part to a lack of availability and provision of British Sign Language interpreters there are also concerns about the accessibility of complaints procedures generally.

The Committee would like to know:

- 1- How complaints from Deaf BSL signers are handled at Llais Cymru;
- 2- How do you ensure that your complaints process is accessible;
- 3- Whether you have been involved in any cases in which British Sign Language was a key feature of the dispute between the complainant and the public service provider;
- 4- Whether you could share any data on the number of complaints you have received regarding the access to British Sign Language by public service providers and a summary of the nature of those complaints;

We would be grateful for a response by 31 October and look forward to receiving it.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Rathbone MS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Rathbone', written in a cursive style.

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, Senedd Cymru

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



# Agenda Item 3.6

## Email sent by Rhidian Hurle to the Equality and Social Justice Committee on the 22.10.25

### Question:

*How do you collaborate and engage with deaf communities regarding the services that you provide? And looking to the future—and hopefully this Act will come into force—how do you see that happening in the future as well?*

### Response:

The engagement group of the digital service for public and patients programme who run the App (DSPP) have a rep from RNID Cymru on Patients and Public Assurance Group and have had two workshops with Welsh Deaf Consortium.

Currently the App is written in text only so we haven't been able to add other ways of using things like BSL in the App itself however the App help and support pages have subtitles in English and Welsh.

The other areas of interest are About Me being a patient captured information feature where people can record what is important to them, how they want to be communicated (eg need BSL or interpreter), their likes, goals and needs which we are hoping will be available via CDR and WCP.

Regards

Rhidian

# Agenda Item 3.7



**Independent Monitoring Authority**  
For the Citizens' Rights Agreements

**IMA**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Civic Centre  
Oystermouth Road  
Swansea  
SA1 3SN

## **Jenny Rathbone MS**

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Sent via email: [SeneddEquality@Senedd.Wales](mailto:SeneddEquality@Senedd.Wales)

23 October 2025

Dear Jenny Rathbone MS

## **Legislation Monitoring by the IMA – Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules: HC733**

As the Committee will be aware, the IMA reports on legislation which impacts citizens' rights arising from the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement and EEA EFTA Separation Agreement and routinely publishes reports on its website (accessible here: [Legislation Monitoring Reports - Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements](#)).

Further to our letter dated 1 November 2024, and in accordance with the commitment by the IMA to share with the Committee reports published in relation to statements of changes to the Immigration Rules (which make changes to the EU Settlement Scheme), please find enclosed a copy of our report on the Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules: HC733, published by the UK Government on 12 March 2025 and found [here](#).

We apologise for the short delay in forwarding our report to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhys Davies', is written in a cursive style.

**Rhys Davies**  
General Counsel

This report is only concerned with the compatibility or otherwise of the legislation with Part 2 of the Withdrawal Agreement and Part 2 of the EEA EFTA Separation Agreement. It does not consider the merits more generally of the policy contained in the legislation and does not consider the lawfulness of the legislation beyond its compatibility with those Agreements.

## Legislation Monitoring Report

<b>Title</b>	Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules: HC 733, 12 March 2025
<b>Date Legislation Considered by IMA</b>	24 July 2025
<b>Date Legislation in Force</b>	9 April 2025 – for the purposes of the changes considered in this report.
<b>Potential Right(s) Affected</b>	Residence
<b>What does the legislation do?</b>	<p>The Immigration Rules are statements by the Secretary of State as to how she will exercise her power to regulate immigration.</p> <p>The report only considers those key changes that fall within the remit of the IMA.</p> <p>Changes are being made to <a href="#">Appendix EU</a>, <a href="#">Appendix EU (Family Permit)</a> and <a href="#">Appendix AR (EU)</a>.</p> <p>Appendix EU contains the provisions relevant to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS), under which residence status conferring rights under the Withdrawal Agreements can be obtained by eligible citizens and relevant family members.</p>

Appendix EU (Family Permit) governs applications by relevant family members who wish to travel to the UK to join their family member.

Appendix AR (EU) governs the administrative review of decisions under the EUSS. An administrative review is an internal mechanism whereby the Home Office reviews a previous decision. From 5 October 2023, administrative review has not been available for an EUSS decision made on or after that date. From 4 April 2024, scope to apply out-of-time for an administrative review of a relevant EUSS decision taken by 5 October 2023 was also removed. Valid applications for an administrative review made before 5 October 2023 (or those accepted out-of-time before 4 April 2024) are still being considered.

The main changes relevant to the work of the IMA are as follows:

- To enable a non-EEA national applicant to the EUSS to use a UK-issued biometric residence card or permit which has expired by up to 18 months as proof of their identity and nationality and, where they use such a biometric residence card, not require them to re-enrol their fingerprint biometrics.
- To confirm that, under the EU law public policy test applicable under the Withdrawal Agreements to suitability decisions based on an applicant's conduct before the end of the transition period, the threshold of 'serious grounds' of public policy or public security is to be met where they have (or are eligible for) indefinite leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU and not under other parts of the Immigration Rules.
- To enable an EUSS or EUSS family permit application to be refused on suitability grounds, without a deportation or exclusion order being in place, where the applicant's conduct.

	<p>before the end of the transition period meets the relevant EU law public policy test applicable under the Withdrawal Agreements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To confirm that a person who became an EU, other EEA, or Swiss citizen after 31.12.2020 cannot sponsor an EUSS family permit application.</li><li>• To confirm that a person with a pending administrative review of an EUSS decision, who has not left the UK or who has been granted entry to the UK (except on immigration bail), will not be removed from the UK.</li></ul>
<b>Comments</b>	<p>The IMA does not raise any issues of concern at this stage.</p> <p>Any citizen experiencing difficulties in exercising their rights is encouraged to report a complaint through the <a href="#">IMA Portal</a>.</p> <p>The IMA also encourages any EUSS applicant, who has experienced any difficulties travelling to the UK, to tell us about their experiences via our dedicated inbox at <a href="mailto:travel@ima-citizensrights.org.uk">travel@ima-citizensrights.org.uk</a></p> <p>Further information about the IMA and guidance on how to report complaints can also be found on the <a href="#">Website</a>.</p>

# Y Pwyllgor Deisebau Agenda Item 3.8

## Petitions Committee

### Senedd Cymru

Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

Deisebau@senedd.cymru

senedd.cymru/SeneddDeisebau

0300 200 6565

### Welsh Parliament

Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Petitions@senedd.wales

senedd.wales/SeneddPetitions

0300 200 6565

Jenny Rathbone MS,  
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

23 October 2025

Dear Jenny,

**Petition P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parent**

The Petitions Committee met on 6 October and considered the above petition, submitted by Lisa Owen.

Members agreed to close the petition. In doing so it was agreed to highlight the petitioner's comments with you as Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, as the appropriate scrutiny committee. It was also agreed to write to the Minister for Children and Social Care, asking that the Welsh Government engage directly with the petitioner to address her further comments.

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: [P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parent](#)

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.

## **P-06-1530 Save Childcare Provision in Wales – Demand Fair Funding and a Fair Process for Providers and Parents – Correspondence from the Petitioner, 20 September 2025**

In response to the letter date 8<sup>th</sup> August from Dawn Bowden

As an introduction to this letter, I agree that the childcare sector is a rich tapestry of different types of organisations as it should be, and I understand that supporting all parents in accessing the service they require is important. And I agree that yes, the sector needs changes and adaptations but by forcing the percentage that looks after working parents, working parents that need care for their children after returning from maternity leave and flexible arrangements that can work around their working lives which day nurseries (the 20%) do facilitate, to close, is not the way forward. The sector that are currently happy with the flat rate are those that are not registered to take under 2's and generally work just outside school hours.

For the following reasons, and others, which I will explain more fully below, the fixed rate cannot work throughout the sector because :

- There will be a knock-on effect of lack of provision for babies, should the 20% withdraw/close.
- Every business is different with different costs, meaning they need to charge differently, otherwise they, as in England will need to close.
- There will be a lack of provision that have adapted to support working parents because it costs money to be flexible.
- The impact of closures will generally leave the sector short of providers if the rate reviews continue to be less than inflation/wage increases.

I have assumed, as it was not clarified, that the 20% referred to are the day nurseries as we work longer hours to accommodate working parents, generally have larger settings and therefore bigger overheads as we tend to own our buildings. We cater for the under two's an age gap not currently addressed in any of the childcare funding offers. This age range is also punished in some areas, as they are already charged more, as the ratio is 1:3 and the space they require is more so it costs even more to facilitate. This rate will increase further if Nurseries are forced to lose money to fund the other parental funding streams.

I contacted 6 local Nurseries to me this morning, ( I did only have a few days to answer this letter) and they all had waiting lists for babies, as do I. So if we are forced to close where will parents and babies go? They wont be able to access the 80% of settings who are supposedly happy with the rates for the moment as these providers don't cater for working parents with children under 2.

Every business has different overheads so a flat rate will never work. You say The Childcare Offer Rate Review 2024 focussed on the costs associated with delivering childcare. No-one has every asked me what my overheads look like, although when I started questioning the flat rate formula and the freeze back in 2023 I offered my figures, which was never taken up. So it seems to be suggested that a playgroup who rents with a full repair lease and a business like mine which has to pay for trees to be felled, drains to be cleaned, gutters to be cleared, gardens to be maintained, the list is endless, need to charge the same figure? An

Early Years Wales article based on consultations with the sector put forward the rate of £7.50. This report has been submitted to Welsh Government and via Federation of Small Business. I am so utterly frustrated that we are being made out to be gold diggers and only doing what we do for financial gain.

We have the most precious gift in life in our hands and every day, I hear Welsh Government refer to the first 1000 days, but in the same breath you will sit back and watch an essential part of the childcare sector disappear. Not because you don't have the money in the budget but because you won't allow a business to do what it needs to survive. If it's about the parents then leave them with the choice they have had since the childcare sector began. If they don't want to pay the shortfall, they can vote with their feet as has always been the case.

To accommodate working parents, I open 51 weeks of the year including bank holidays. I open 7am – 6pm and I charge by the hour unlike other nurseries alike to me so parents only pay for what they use. I have an acre of outside plays areas unlike the 80% they refer to that don't need to charge what the larger nurseries charge. I have won awards for the investment into Apprenticeships, which has always been down as an added cost and I pay my staff the Real Living Wage. I was graded excellent in all six areas in my Estyn and CIW inspection, one of now 3 in Wales to do so and can say that we are the flagship setting for Newport education (I have been told that by the LA). As I write this my 3 year olds are having 1<sup>st</sup> Aid training and that costs money. Are you happy to take all those extra experiences away from them because if I can only earn enough to just cover wages. All the extra services we provide to parents and children like this training will have to stop. During my 27 years, it's the extra special environment and extra experiences that we provide that parents have been to prepared to pay extra for. I don't want a report that states "adequate" because I can only afford to provide the bare minimum.

Referring to the fact that the rate was increased by 28% but not mentioning that was after freezing the rate for 3 years - which was never stated in the agreement when we signed up - is both tedious and misleading. Welsh Government have partly recognised their error by in 2024 inserting into the agreement that the rate would be reviewed each year. You may think that is fair but reviewing does not mean it will be increased in line with wages and I refer to wages as throughout the child care sector due to the child:staff regulated ratios, wages, unlike any other sector will always be at least 60% of our income.

Quoted from letter:

*On the matter of top-up fees, the Welsh Government does not have the necessary regulatory powers over childcare providers in Wales to mandate business models of operation and childcare providers are permitted to stipulate their own operational hours for the Childcare Offer.* Welsh Government has effectively taken over the running of my business without even knowing how it operates. If when we signed up to deliver this I was told that they would freeze the rate for 3 years or that I would potentially be in a position where the rate offered to parents wasn't enough to cover what I needed to be sustainable so I would have to dig into savings to cover it, I would never have signed up to deliver it. I lost £20k turnover in the second year of the freeze £40k in the third year. That was my business reserves which if running a business correctly we should have.

FYI "Standard 17 of CIW Minimum Standards (Note 'minimum) states Financial Procedures. Outcome: Children and their parents are safeguarded by the Registered Person operating sound financial procedures. The registered person is responsible for ensuring that effective financial procedures are operated"  
This I have done for 27 years.

Letters from Welsh Government continually point out that I can withdraw from providing the Childcare Offer funding, as its voluntary, but I am fighting because it is the parents will suffer should I do that. However to minimise the impact of losses I do intend to withdraw from providing the Education offer.

I have informed Newport Local Authority that I intend to withdraw from providing education as of July 2026. I am leaving it this long as I understand this is not fair on the parents and they need time to plan and have explained to the parents that as Welsh Government will not allow me to charge the difference between what they are offering the parent and what I need to survive, I have no choice. I will look to offer Flying Start to spread their funding opportunities through my parents, but it will be done with an exit strategy in place. I say this as this year Flying Start just about cover the rate in my area but my experience with the Childcare Offer as shown me I cannot trust what the future holds.

Those parents will now have to pay an extra £78 per week. However if I was allowed to charge childcare offer top up of approximately £12, they wouldn't have to

So here we are, the question, that no-one has asked us. It is hard to quantify due to the meal charging system they decided as every setting breaks it down differently and it is dependant on what hours the child attends which is what parents don't actually like, because it isn't clear or straight forward. At my setting we are working towards a 4 day week as we cannot pay the wages the practitioners are worth so try to achieve a work life balance instead with fits with the new working week patterns.

The following Financial Example (which not one person has asked us) illustrates the reality for both parties, parents and the provision):

A child attending my setting would be charged £7.80 per hour whatever their age.

So for a 40 hour week all parents of children under 3 would pay £312.00 per week.

If they claimed the 20 hours childcare and the 10 hours education that we currently offer, Welsh Government give them 30 hours @ £6.40 which equals £192.00 towards their care and the parents pays us for 10 hours @ £7.80 plus approximately £40 towards meals depending on their hours and I have to cover the remaining £12.

Now that doesn't look bad, nothing to make a song and dance about and nothing that a parent should object to, but you say different.

The problem is I need to protect my business from that gap increasing because I cannot afford to lose another £60,000 should the review in 2026 become 2% and the wages again rise by 10%. I am financially planning to protect my business, my children and the livelihood of my team.

FYI £12 per week loss for 30 children actually equates to approximately -£18,000 per year for me. The parent however has a childcare bill that has dropped from £16,000 to £2,500. (All approx.)

Quoted from letter

*We have also seen increasing representation from parents regarding top-up fees, and they tell us that additional costs introduced by their childcare provider are putting them under considerable financial pressure. In any review of our current charging policy, we would need to carefully balance what is affordable for the provider and what is affordable for parents, while supporting both.*

I would very much like to know what are the top up fees that parents are struggling with? I would like to see who and what demographic they consulted and how the questions were worded as my parents most definitely do not think that way. They are more than happy to have their childcare bills reduced but not at the expense of me closing the doors. I know I am not the only setting with parents who think that way. Our survey which had 573 responses did not get those responses. Also as we have not been able to charge top up fees to date so how have parents even made those representations? However in the Vales of Glamorgan, they have always charged the shortfall as the LA understood that they are businesses that need to survive and there were not any complaints from parents.

If you didn't break down all funding into sections, I agree you would have had queries as I would not look to charge Flying Start parents top up fees although that does seem to be diverting from being for disadvantaged parents to for all two year olds.

I will say I have completed one survey about the childcare offer and have print outs of what I submitted which shows the questions were in no way relevant and could never have produced satisfactory responses that would have informed anyone.

No-one has engaged with the sector. CWLWM are not our voice. CWLWM were set up by Welsh Government to bring the different childcare representatives together to work more seamlessly, which I agreed with as until then, they were duplicating too many areas which was a waste of money, but the bulk of their funding comes from Welsh Government and they have to carry out specific work stipulated by Welsh Government to get that funding and are told what to do with it. They are NOT our voice. We asked to have a representative on the policy working groups but that didn't happen. The only person I have met with (on behalf of the Childcare Owners) is [REDACTED] from Newport City Council who really has no say in this and [REDACTED] Senedd Liaison Advisor.

I do not wish to address the Flying Start Programme at this stage. I am aware that there are issues but again because they don't consult with the sector and because as with all funding streams, they are rolled out differently in different areas. Going forward we need actual representation on boards so the issues are addressed before roll out.

Yours sincerely  
Lisa Owen

—  
**Local Government  
and Housing Committee**

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

24 October 2025

Dear Jenny,

**Provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers**

We are writing to share an update received from the Welsh Government regarding implementing the recommendations of our inquiry into the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Given the Equality and Social Justice Committee's interest in this area, please find attached the Welsh Government's response for your information and consideration.

We would particularly draw your attention to the Welsh Government's response to Recommendation 7 of our report, which stated: *"The Welsh Government should explore how the Sites Capital Grant could be used to support the development of private sites"*

In their Anti-Racist Action Plan, the Welsh Government had previously committed to *"Review the current funding policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites and assess its effectiveness, with a view to piloting additional or new ways of funding site provision, including support for private sites"*

The intended output of this commitment was to have a *"Commissioned review of the funding approach with recommendations for alternative and additional funding models."*

Welsh Government initially aimed to complete this by 2024.

However, the latest response is relatively limited in detail as to how this will be taken forward. It states: *"Officials are considering how best to support the development of private sites. Insights from the private planning advice pilot will inform our approach to this recommendation"*.

In light of this, we wonder whether there is potential for your Committee to consider pressing for further clarity on this point during your upcoming scrutiny session with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip on the draft budget for 2026-27. We would be grateful if you could update us on any discussions you have with the Cabinet Secretary on this.

Yours sincerely,



John Griffiths MS  
Chair

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

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

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/504/25

John Griffiths MS  
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

15 October 2025

Dear John,

Thank you for the question you asked in the Senedd on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September regarding improving the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wales.

In my response I promised to write to you, and members of the Local Government Housing Committee, with an update on progress against the recommendations made by the committee. Please see that update attached.

I hope this information is helpful in updating the Committee's recommendations.

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 A – Welsh Government Updates to Local Government Housing Recommendations from February 2025:**

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Welsh Government Update</u>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government provides an update on progress made against recommendations in our 2022 report on the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>An update on progress made against the 21 recommendations made by the Local Government and Housing Committee in 2022 can be found as part of <b>Annex B.</b></p>

<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should provide the Committee with the latest data on the number of transit pitches in Wales and update us on how it intends to increase transitory provision in Wales including how it will ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are met.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>There is currently no transit site provision in Wales.</p> <p>One of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) actions is to engage with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members to identify the need to provide appropriate transit provision.</p> <p>Officials met with all local authorities in January 2024 to discuss taking a regional approach to the provision of transit sites and collection of associated data. The overwhelming feedback was that a nationwide evidence base would need to be commissioned to understand movement of Gypsies and Travellers both in and out of Wales and in and out of local authority boundaries.</p> <p>Welsh Government awarded a contract to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW) to build a national evidence base about the need for transit sites, in collaboration with relevant regional parties and Gypsy and Traveller people. Having this information will help to ensure that transit provision is located appropriately and is accessible to those who need it.</p> <p>This contract will provide an evidence base of the needs of transit provision across Wales, make recommendations for the location of transit provision and provide a suitable model for implementing transit sites.</p> <p>Involving community members in this evidence-based approach is essential to help understanding of the travelling life for families across Wales.</p> <p>Officials will receive a full report in December, after which officials will work with local authorities to discuss plans for transit facilities across Wales.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should work closely with local authorities and members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to deliver additional temporary negotiated stopping sites. All negotiated stopping sites in Wales must provide appropriate waste and sanitary services.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>As part of the transit contract referenced above, the contractor will include discussions and options around negotiated stopping places in tandem with or as an alternative to transit provision. Once we have the final recommendations, we will work with local authorities on the recommendations.</p> <p>Welsh Government provides capital site funding available to local authorities to fund either local authority sites or transit sites. In 2024-25, we extended the eligibility criteria to include the acquisition of land which can be used for new pitches, new sites, transit sites or temporary/negotiated stopping places.</p> <p>In addition, a public consultation on four Welsh Government guidance documents has been completed. One of these, '<i>Managing Unauthorised Encampments in Wales</i>', has been updated to include a three-path approach for local authorities to adopt when engaging with families on encampments.</p> <p>The guidance also supports the development of transit sites and temporary/negotiated stopping places, with a clear emphasis on meeting the family's welfare needs, including the provision of suitable waste management and sanitation facilities.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government sets out how it is monitoring use of the Sites Capital Grant to ensure that funds are being used appropriately and address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Wales.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>In 2024-25 Welsh Government made available £3.44m capital funding for local authorities to improve, extend or build new local authority sites, whether residential or transit; and for land acquisition of new sites. The same amount has been made available in 2025-26 financial year.</p> <p>Once funding is awarded, monthly monitoring meetings are held between the Gypsy Roma Traveller grant manager and the local authority to track progress, confirm that agreed works are completed, and ensure that funds are used appropriately to meet the needs of families.</p> <p>Last year, 14 local authorities received capital funding for a variety of site improvements to the value of £1,865 million. These improvements included refurbishment of utility blocks, renovating community buildings, installing electric smart meters, replacing fencing, digital connectivity and improving drainage. So far this year we have approved 14 grants totalling £2.41 million.</p> <p>One example of the positive impact this funding has had is the installation of domestic rate meters at local authority sites in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil. These improvements are welcomed by residents.</p> <p>It is essential that local authorities carry out meaningful consultation with residents to understand their needs before submitting bids for financial support. This is discussed at each Welsh Government assessment panel to ensure engagement and value for money is achieved.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government reviews the criteria and application process for the Sites Capital Grant to ensure that it is effectively utilised by local authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>The Sites Capital Grant guidance for 2025-26 was updated earlier this year to place greater emphasis on developing new pitches, ensuring the funding is available to help address the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment unmet need across Wales.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should set out how it will work with local authorities to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller site maintenance is undertaken, and how it will tackle local authorities' failure to maintain and improve those sites. As part of this, it should consider how local authorities fund and prioritise Gypsy and Traveller site maintenance.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that Gypsy and Traveller sites are not only maintained but improved, with dignity, safety and inclusion as non-negotiable principles.</p> <p>Welsh Government works closely with local authorities to promote planned and prioritised site maintenance rather than reactive approaches.</p> <p>To support this, four guidance documents are being reviewed following a public consultation over the Summer. One of these documents, '<i>Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales</i>', places stronger emphasis on developing responsive maintenance plans in consultation with residents, with a focus on long-term sustainability.</p> <p>The guidance also highlights the importance of providing clear and accessible channels for families to report issues and seek assistance, empowering communities to actively participate in improving their living conditions.</p> <p>Where funding is sought through the Welsh Government Sites Capital Grant, local authorities must demonstrate meaningful engagement with site residents regarding proposed refurbishments before bids are approved.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should explore how the Sites Capital Grant could be used to support the development of private sites.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>Officials are considering how best to support the development of private sites. Insights from the private planning advice pilot will inform our approach to this recommendation.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>The Committee Recommends that: The Welsh Government should progress the pilot programme to provide advice to Gypsies and Travellers seeking help to develop private sites as a matter of urgency and update the Committee in three months.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>Buying land that is ultimately deemed unsuitable to turn into a Gypsy and Traveller site as a permanent home for their families has been a recurring problem throughout Wales.</p> <p>The Welsh Government is working in partnership with Travelling Ahead (TGP Cymru) on a pilot project to provide tailored planning advice for families who wish to develop their own site.</p> <p>During this pilot, we aim to better understand the demand of community members in need of planning advice or wanting to set up their own private sites.</p> <p>This 18-month pilot, is a key part of delivering the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, helping Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families access safe, culturally appropriate accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should reinstate the Gypsy and Traveller Forum with urgency.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept</b></p>	<p>The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Stakeholder Group has been reinstated, involving community members, local authorities, third sector organisations and Welsh Government officials.</p> <p>The purpose of these meetings is bringing together Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people with local authorities and voluntary sector organisations, to ensure all our policy work and decisions support the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities throughout Wales.</p> <p>This will too ensure that decisions and actions are informed by lived experience and actively support the wellbeing and rights of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities throughout Wales.</p> <p>We have awarded a contract to ‘There and Back Again’ to coordinate invitations and reimburse community members for their time and contributions in these meetings.</p> <p>We have already held two meetings of the new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller group in Mid Wales and West Wales. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in South Wales, in October, with North Wales to follow in early 2026.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>The Committee Recommends that: The Welsh Government should ensure that each local authority has a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer.</p> <p><b>Response: Accept in principle</b></p>	<p>Welsh Government is not responsible for local authority staffing decisions; we can, however, encourage local authorities to appoint designated Gypsy and Traveller Liaison officers. We are aware that 15 local authorities already have designated Gypsy and Traveller posts.</p> <p>It is essential for all local authorities to recognise the importance of having a dedicated Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Liaison Officer to understand the unique needs of these communities are understood and addressed. This commitment by local authorities will foster an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.</p> <p>A further ArWAP goal is to ‘Set up community mentor or liaison roles for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people’. Officials are currently considering options on how to develop this initiative.</p> <p>The community mentor roles will include leadership training to ensure that the mentors are well-equipped to support their communities. This training will be identified and led by the mentors themselves, ensuring it is tailored to the community's needs.</p>
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## Annex B – Welsh Government Updates to Local Government Housing Recommendations from August 2022:

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Welsh Government Progress</u>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to support local authorities in the provision of sites that are appropriate for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including how it will work with local authorities and communities to mitigate the challenges of finding suitable land for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller site accommodation.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Welsh Government has a programme of monitoring with local authorities to review their plans to address unmet need identified in their 2016-2022 Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment. These meetings are at ministerial and official level.</p> <p>Welsh Government provides capital site funding to local authorities to fund either residential sites or transit sites. This can fund projects to refurbish existing accommodation, construct new pitches and improve the sustainability of sites for residents. Last year, we extended the eligibility criteria to include the acquisition of land to try and unblock local authority barriers to the provision of sites.</p> <p>Welsh Government has awarded funding to Travelling Ahead (TGP Cymru) to provide private planning advice to communities over an 18-month period in addition to the existing Advocacy and Advice contract). This will help to mitigate the challenges for finding suitable land for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to support Corporate Joint Committees and individual local authorities to develop a network of transitory provision, and how it will monitor and ensure progress.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Welsh Government has awarded a contract to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW), to provide research in the form of a national evidence base on the needs of transit across Wales. The research will make recommendations around the location and models of transit.</p> <p>Involving community members in this evidence-based approach will help us to understand the travelling life for families across Wales.</p> <p>Officials will receive a full report in December, after which officials will work with local authorities to discuss plans for transit facilities across Wales.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> The Welsh Government should provide an update on arrangements for an independent and trusted advice service for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including funding, resource and skills requirement.</p>	<p>Welsh Government has awarded Travelling Ahead (TGP Cymru) to deliver an Advocacy and Advice service to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people following a competitive procurement exercise. This contract will be delivered from September 2024 to August 2027.</p> <p>The objectives of the service are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate equality of opportunity for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers within Welsh society.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support and connect with expert advice services to help community members integrate effectively into Welsh society, including advocating changes to public processes where necessary.</li> <li>• Support community cohesion through challenging negative stereotypes and fostering good relations between groups.</li> <li>• Empower communities and individuals to have a voice and make representations on their own behalf on policy development and any other issues raised.</li> <li>• Support the Welsh Government to eliminate racism and discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and to offer solutions to the barriers Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people face.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with Welsh Government to address systemic issues impacting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and designing solutions to resolve issues reflecting the lived experience of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.</li> <li>• Fully engage with evaluation of the contract, both evaluation of the contract's performance as well as evaluation with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller service users.</li> <li>• The service is also available to adults, children and young people in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.:</b> The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to ensure that they have the necessary resources to fulfil their duties under the Housing Act.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Since all Welsh local authorities Cycle 2 (2016-2022) Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments have been approved, officials have regular monitoring meetings to ensure local authorities are meeting the identified need of their communities. The site Capital Grant is available to help them to do that.</p> <p>Officials work in partnership with local authority Gypsy, Roma and Traveller leads to support their day-to-day interactions with community members, through monitoring of their 2016-2022 GTAA compliance, through the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group and through the case work officials become involved with as highlighted by our Advocacy and Advice contract providers.</p> <p>The policy team has a dedicated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller grant manager to support applications from local authorities. Monitoring meetings are set up between the Gypsy, Roma Traveller grant manager and the local authority to ensure all works are undertaken and completed as agreed and funds are being used appropriately.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> The Welsh Government must ensure that the Housing Act is effective in providing suitable sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. It should therefore set out how it intends to tighten its monitoring of the implementation of the Act.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>As part of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) process, officials meet regularly with local authorities to hold them to account for their duty in meeting the need they identified in their GTAA.</p> <p>These monitoring arrangements have also included raising awareness of the £3.44 million Capital Sites Grant. As a result, uptake during this financial year has led to £2.4 million being approved so far.</p> <p>Section 104 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh Ministers the power to direct the authority to exercise its powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. This is a power Ministers will consider using if it appears that local authorities are not making all reasonable efforts to meet their duties.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> The Welsh Government should provide further information about how and when it will use its powers to ensure that local authorities deliver on their duties under the Housing Act.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>The escalation process is assessed considering timelines for planning activities by local authorities, ensuring Welsh Government officials are kept informed of any potential risks or delays. If progress is unsatisfactory, officials will request an update from local authorities, emphasising their statutory duty. This ensures accountability and timely resolution of issues.</p> <p>If a resolution cannot be found, officials will brief Ministers, who may wish to escalate this with Council leaders.</p> <p>Section 104 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 gives Welsh Ministers the power to direct the authority to exercise its powers under section 56 of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013. This is a power Ministers will consider using if it appears that local authorities are not making all reasonable efforts to meet their duties.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> The Welsh Government should set out its plans, including timescales, for evaluating the effectiveness of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in helping to provide sites for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>The ArWAP was refreshed in 2024 and includes new actions and timelines with goals and actions to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people.</p> <p>These actions and goals are embedded across numerous policy areas who are responsible for reporting on outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to the ArWAP External Accountability Group (EAG).</p> <p>The External Accountability Group for the ArWAP now includes 2 members with expertise in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller policy area. Their participation will aid in evaluating the effectiveness of the ArWAP.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b></p> <p>The Welsh Government should provide an update on the timescales for the actions in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan which are already underway.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Officials met with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholders and community members to discuss the ArWAP refresh in May 2024. Feedback from community members were that the actions were too complicated, and the language needed to be simplified.</p> <p>The actions were revised and approved by in December 2024. Following the refresh, one new action was included related to community mentor/liaison roles. The remaining actions were simplified and timescales reviewed. Of the fourteen actions, six have been completed and one is nearing completion. Five goals remain in the policy development stage.</p> <p>An additional action was incorporated to address the availability and readiness of relevant powers under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which commits Welsh Government to respond appropriately should circumstances change.</p> <p>Key updates include:</p> <p><u>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Stakeholder Group:</u></p> <p>One of the most immediate actions was to set up a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller group which has now held two hybrid meetings with community members, stakeholders and local authorities in Aberystwyth and Llanelli. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in South Wales in October, with North Wales to follow in early 2026.</p> <p>This group includes members of the community. ‘There and Back Again’ who has been awarded the contract to coordinate invitations and reimburse community members for their time and contributions.</p> <p><u>Transit:</u></p> <p>The transit research contract has been awarded to Gypsies and Travellers Wales (GTW) to provide research and recommendations around where transit provision would be most suitable across Wales and what this could practically look like. Involving community members in this evidence-based approach will help in understanding the travelling life for families across Wales and prevent social exclusion of this community. Recommendations are due to Welsh Government by December 2025 and will be shared with relevant local authorities following this.</p>
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	<p><u>National Training Programme:</u> Taye Training has been awarded the contract to deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller training to all 22 local authorities. This training is currently being co-developed with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members, which will be rolled out from April 2026 for three years.</p> <p><u>Private Planning Advice Pilot:</u> An 18-month private planning pilot is being delivered by Travelling Ahead (TGP Cymru) to provide tailored planning advice for families who wish to develop their own site.</p> <p><u>Guidance Documents:</u> Officials have revised four guidance documents pertaining to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and all have now been consulted on.</p> <p>In correlation to the public consultation, third sector organisations were commissioned to engage directly with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities to explore what these guidance documents mean to them.</p> <p>The final guidance has been informed by over 200 interviews from this community, whose voices have been listened to and reflected in the final guidance, which are to be published in the coming months.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> In reviewing the sites guidance, the Welsh Government should explain how it intends to engage with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to ensure that design and location needs of communities are better reflected in the guidance.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>In parallel with the public consultation of four Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents for local authorities, my officials awarded contracts with two Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations to undertake facilitated engagement work on these draft guidance documents to inform their development.</p> <p>These documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales</li> <li>• Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales</li> <li>• Undertaking Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessments</li> <li>• Managing Unauthorised Encampments</li> </ul> <p>Due to the high level of community engagement, the forthcoming publication and distribution of these final documents to local authorities is intended to support them in their responsibilities to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> The Welsh Government should conduct a review of all guidance relating to the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>All Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents have been reviewed and are currently undergoing final updates, following the public consultation and community engagement.</p> <p>Capital Site Guidance was also reviewed for 2025-26 and will again be revisited for 2026-27.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b> The Welsh Government should provide further details on the learning and development support that will be provided to local authority elected members on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths. This should include details on: who will receive the training; timescales; how it will be resourced and delivered; and whether it will be a statutory requirement to undertake the training.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Taye Training has been awarded the contract to deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller training to all 22 Local authorities. This training is currently being co-developed with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members.</p> <p>The delivery of these training sessions to all local authorities will commence from April 2026 over a 3-year period. A mock training session will be delivered to community members and Welsh Government in December 2025.</p> <p>Officials will liaise with Taye Training regularly throughout the development stages.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b> The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to evaluate the impact of the training for local authority elected members on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that our national training programme for local authority elected members has a real and positive impact on understanding Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths.</p> <p>The contract with our training provider includes an evaluation of the content and delivery of the programme.</p> <p>This evaluation will include feedback from participants and evidence of improved engagement with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p> <p>We will use the findings from this evaluation to inform future policy and practice, and we are committed to sharing these outcomes with stakeholders to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.</p> <p>This work forms part of our wider commitment under the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> The Welsh Government should include community councillors in the commitment in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to provide training for local authority elected members on Gypsy and Traveller communities' culture, needs and strengths.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Welsh Government's commitment under the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan is to deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultural awareness training to all local authority elected members and officials across Wales.</p> <p>To help achieve this, Teye Training, working on behalf of the Welsh Government will deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller training to all 22 local authorities from April 2026.</p> <p>I wrote to all Elected officials during the summer to provide an update of the work we are doing to support this community.</p> <p>The National Training Programme will be delivered to a range of employees including Elected officials, local authority leaders and any other local authority officials who support this community.</p> <p>I want to ensure that all local authorities in Wales understand the values, needs and lived experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, which is why this training will be co-developed and delivered by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b> The Welsh Government should set out what steps, other than those in the Anti-racist Action Plan, it will take to improve knowledge and understanding of the culture, needs and strengths of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities among the wider community.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Within the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, there is an action under the Leadership chapter to set up community mentor or liaison roles for Gypsy, Traveller people.</p> <p>Officials are considering policy options to recruit members from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community to step into this community mentor/liaison role. Officials will also be considering mechanisms by which community mentors can be used within local authorities.</p> <p>Addressing the under-representation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller voices, mentoring, coaching, and community leadership programmes will increase understanding of racial inequality and strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the culture and needs of the community.</p> <p><u>Winter Fuel</u> Gypsy and Traveller communities, particularly local authority site residents, commonly pay high rates for fuel because their sites are classed as commercial premises. Caravans also have limited options for sustainability and are costly to heat. Some families rely on expensive gas bottles.</p> <p>In 2024-25, Welsh Government provided funding of £500k for a package of winter fuel support to the Gypsy Roma</p>

	<p>Traveller community. This comprised £200k to the Fuel Bank Foundation and £300k to local authorities to support this community during the winter months. Officials are considering a similar model for 2025-26 support.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b> The Welsh Government should review whether the existing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments process is the most appropriate and effective way of assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>The GTAA process was reviewed in 2024.</p> <p>Public consultation of four Gypsy and Traveller guidance documents has taken place, including the 'Undertaking a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment' Guidance. Community Engagement has also been carried out to inform the development of these guidance documents to ensure community voices have been incorporated meaningfully.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b> The Welsh Government should work with local authorities to review how engagement and consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities during the accommodation assessment process can be improved, including the extent to which the measures and actions within the Anti-racist Action Plan have made a difference.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>A fully informed Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is only achievable through effective engagement with the community. The revised GTAA Guidance strengthens the requirement for meaningful and effective engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.</p> <p>Public consultation of four Gypsy and Traveller guidance have taken place, which includes 'Undertaking a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment'.</p> <p>This guidance has been informed by interviews with over 200 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, whose voices have been listened to and reflected in the final guidance.</p> <p>The guidance also considers the impact of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, with a focus on how its measures have influenced engagement and consultation practices during the assessment process.</p> <p>I expect positive relationships between all local authorities and communities to underpin all future GTAAs, and my officials will continue to monitor how engagement practices evolve in line with the guidance.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b> The Welsh Government should clarify what process is in place to monitor the Gypsy and Traveller</p>	<p>There is a scrutiny process both at official level and at Ministerial level as part of the GTAA cycle process. Once a GTAA is submitted and scrutinised, Ministers can accept reject or accept with modifications, each local authorities GTAA but are expected to continue to deliver against their</p>

<p>Accommodation Assessments on an all-Wales basis in order to gain an understanding of accommodation needs at a national as well as a local level.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>existing GTAA until the new assessment had been approved.</p> <p>Officials can use the content of the GTAAs, their existing knowledge about the quality of Gypsy and Traveller sites and any casework identified through the Advocacy and Advice contract to discuss specific sites or issues with local authorities.</p> <p>As outlined above, as part of the GTAA process, officials are carrying out regular monitoring with local authorities to hold them to account for their duty in meeting the need they identified in their GTAA.</p> <p>These monitoring arrangements have also included raising awareness of the Capital Sites Grant funding and uptake this financial year to date has been excellent.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 18:</b> The Welsh Government should conduct a broader review of how the funding for the development of sites relates to the requirements in terms of the standards of sites.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Officials review the Site Capital guidance annually to ensure standards are followed and the most up to date information and guidance is included.</p> <p>We have added the option to use the capital grant for site acquisition to further support local authorities to meet their duty to provide accommodation for these communities.</p> <p>As a result of increased market costs, the guidance now reflects the maximum cost per new pitch has been increased from £150,000 to £200,000.</p> <p>We have also removed bidding round deadlines, so that in 2025–26, the bidding process will remain open year-round.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 19:</b> The Welsh Government should explore all possible options for funding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller accommodation, including whether the criteria for the Capital Sites Grant should be broadened to allow local authorities to purchase land for the development of new sites and how funding could be used to support the development of private sites.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>As part of the Capital Sites funding for 2024-25, we have added the option to use the capital grant for site acquisition to further support local authorities to meet their duty to provide accommodation for these communities.</p> <p>Officials are currently exploring how we can fund private sites for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 20:</b> The Welsh Government should provide an update on the work undertaken to provide transit pitches across Wales before the Senedd's summer recess in 2023.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Please see response to Recommendation 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 21:</b> The Welsh Government should set out how it intends to work with the police and partner organisations to communicate to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities any anticipated changes to plans for enforcing the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 in Wales.</p> <p><b>Response: Accepted</b></p>	<p>Officials are members of the Criminal Justice Anti-Racist Wales Subgroup who are working collaboratively with police forces and community representatives to develop protocols for managing unauthorised encampments.</p> <p>A Task &amp; Finish Group has been established, bringing together community members, Welsh Government officials, representatives from all four Welsh police forces and voluntary sector partners.</p> <p>This group is working to finalise the protocols and ensure they reflect the lived experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.</p>

# Agenda Item 3.10



Canolfan  
Llywodraethiant Cymru  
Wales Governance  
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24 October 2025

Annwyl Ms Rathbone,

I write in response to your letter on 21 October 2025 seeking further clarification about the sources of data excluded from the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025* on 29 September.

**Could you specify which datasets from the original list of ‘priority areas’ were not included in the Ministry of Justice’s release?**

In January 2025, I was asked to provide the Ministry of Justice with a list of ‘top 5 or so priority items’ or Wales-only data areas which were not currently available as part of the Ministry of Justice’s routine releases. In response, I put together a list of six areas for consideration, along with a rationale for why they should be made publicly available. The data areas I requested (without the rationale) are listed below.

1. Welsh people (as defined by their home address prior to entering custody) in prison by establishment, by sentence type, offence type, age, ethnic group, religious identity, security category, local authority.
2. Welsh women in prison (as defined by their home address prior to entering custody) in prison by sentence type, offence type, age, ethnic group, religious identity, local authority.
3. English people (as defined by their home address prior to entering custody) in prison by sentence type, offence type, age, sex, ethnic group, religious identity, security category, local authority.

4. The number of those recorded as homeless at prison reception broken down by prison establishment in England and Wales, and those released from prison with no fixed address broken down by the releasing establishment.
5. The number people under probation supervision in Wales broken down by sex (male and female), ethnic identity, offence group.
6. The number of Welsh-speaking prisoners broken down by establishment in England and Wales and the number of Welsh-speaking prison staff broken down by establishment.

In the days leading up to the first *Wales Justice Data: Annual Release* on 29 September, the Ministry of Justice wrote to confirm which data were to be included in the release, and explained which of those were not. I provide a detailed breakdown for each priority area below.

1. **Welsh people in prison:** These data were included (in full) in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*.
2. **Welsh women in prison.** These data were included (in full) in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*.
3. **English people in prison.** These data were included (in full) in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*.
4. **Homeless at reception and release:** These data were *not* included in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*. Despite being able to access data on homelessness at reception using requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Ministry of Justice advised that they do not record data for homeless on reception in ways that are sufficiently complete, consistent or rigorous for external sharing. The Ministry explained that data that are collected are held locally by individual prisons and translating this into anything meaningful would require significant development and prioritisation against other asks. The Ministry informed me that they are currently working towards ‘released homeless by institution’ for internal use and that they will consider how best to share these data once they are available.

5. **Probation supervision by sex, ethnic identity and offence group:** These data were *not* included in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025* for two separate reasons. Firstly, the probation caseload data broken down by sex is already made publicly available via the CSVs that the Ministry of Justice publish alongside the main probation tables. Although it would be helpful to have these included in a clear Wales-only table/breakdown, these data can be found by searching through the *caseloadQ12025.csv*. Data on probation caseloads by ethnic group or offence group, however, were not included in the release because, according to the Ministry of Justice, these breakdowns would require development, resource and prioritisation.
  
6. **Welsh-speaking prisoners and staff:** These data were *not* included in the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*. Although data on the number of Welsh-speaking prisoners can be accessed using requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Ministry of Justice informed me that although their ‘Welsh Language Scheme 2024-27 has now been approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner... it will be some time before robust data is available for publication outside of the Scheme’s monitoring updates’. The Ministry also confirmed that ‘data for Welsh speaking staff is too incomplete for publication’ at present, but these data can also be accessed via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Can you provide a breakdown of the most critical data gaps (e.g. parental imprisonment, deaths in custody, Welsh-speaking prisoners) and why they matter for scrutiny and policy?**

Although Wales remains formally part of a ‘unitary’ England and Wales justice system, the Welsh Government has a significant role to play in the Welsh criminal justice system. *The Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge* (Chapter Four) offers a comprehensive overview of the devolved government’s activities and many responsibilities in the criminal justice policy space. The majority of the data that I have asked the Ministry of Justice to provide over many years can, either directly or in-directly, be mapped onto the Welsh Government’s responsibilities. These data, therefore, are vital to understanding the success (or otherwise) of the Welsh Government’s own policies and pledges and can contribute to effective and enhanced scrutiny. These include the following areas:

- Housing status of prisoners arriving at prison and on release (*Ending Homelessness in Wales*)
- Self-harm among Welsh prisoners (*Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 to 2035*)
- Parental imprisonment (*Women's Justice Blueprint*)
- Welsh language (*Cymraeg 2050*)
- Pregnant Welsh women in prison and the number of births (*Women's Justice Blueprint*)
- The proportion of sentenced served by Welsh people broken down by ethnic group (*Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan*)
- The number of Welsh people released from prison by establishment (*Ending Homelessness in Wales*)

Beyond the Welsh Government's formal responsibilities, however, Wales-only data are also vitally important as they have the potential to reveal something about our criminal justice system in Wales and the treatment and experiences of those within it (or those from Wales). By continuing to ask searching and far-reaching questions about the operation of the system in Wales, these data can contribute to political, academic and public debates on Welsh criminal justice. These data areas include:

- The number of Welsh people who have died in prison custody.
- The release and recall breakdown among Welsh prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences.
- The use of care and separation units (segregation) in Welsh prisons.
- The use of recall by probation services in Wales by sex.
- The number of formal prisoner complaints in Welsh prisons.
- Investigations into prison staff assaults on prisoners in Wales.

**Were any of the omissions due to data not being collected at all, or simply not being published?**

None of the omissions were due to data not being collected at all. This situation is routinely avoided by only asking for data which already exist (and are often published) on an England and Wales level. The most consistent issue I have been confronted with over the last decade is that data collected on an England and Wales basis are not disaggregated to the Wales-only

level. When asking for these data using Freedom of Information requests, the Ministry of Justice will regularly inform me (often with justification) that the cost of disaggregating these data would exceed the cost limit set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is one of the major limitations of accessing Wales-only data through requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and further underlines the importance of a routine (and comprehensive) publication schedule.

The reasons given for not providing the data listed in the 'priority areas' I requested were largely due to the Wales-only level not being readily available. See responses above for a more detailed and specific set of reasons provided by the Ministry of Justice.

**What are the practical consequences of not having access to these missing datasets for researchers and policymakers? AND How do these gaps affect our understanding of criminal justice, especially in areas like racial disproportionality or women's imprisonment?**

The lack of Wales-only data has consequences for a range of different people. In 2021, the Senedd's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee were told that the unavailability of disaggregated data 'could create barriers to the assessment of health and social care needs' in prison, 'limit assessment of the equivalence or otherwise of prison and community health and social care services', and 'hinder understanding of how prisoners' linguistic needs (including Welsh) were taken into account in service and workforce planning'. During the Equality and Social Justice's Committee's own recent inquiry into women's experiences of the criminal justice system, members were told that a lack of disaggregated data made it difficult for service providers to obtain a 'full picture of women from Wales' experiences of the criminal justice system'.

The gaps in Wales-only data also present a range of problems to those responsible for scrutinising criminal justice services, with the lack of readily accessible data making 'meaningful scrutiny and accountability very much more difficult' (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022: 156). For those working in the House of Commons and the Senedd, see also academic researchers. The report of the Commission on Justice in Wales (2019: 427) was clear in its conclusion that the lack of available Wales-only data had 'inevitably contributed' to a 'major deficiency in Wales specific research' on law and criminal justice. If research is to play an

important role in the process of scrutinising the Welsh criminal justice system, as well as offering bold alternative solutions to its many (and most) intractable problems, then better access to Wales-only data is imperative.

It is also worth stressing that access to better Wales-only data is only the first step. Drawing upon evidence received by the Wales Governance Centre in 2023, the Equality and Social Justice Committee's (2024: 37) *Action, not words: towards an anti-racist Wales by 2030* report recommended that the Welsh Government establish a Welsh Criminal Justice Observatory to provide (much needed) additional research capacity in this area. It is hoped that the next Welsh Government can deliver upon this recommendation and that a Welsh Criminal Justice Observatory will be established to make full use of these (now) accessible data and, in doing so, further our understanding of the many issues facing the Welsh criminal justice system.

**We would also appreciate if you could outline your expectations or recommendations for future data releases?**

I will be meeting with the Executive Director of HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales and the Ministry of Justice's Chief Statistician and Deputy Director: Prisons, Probation, Reoffending and Performance Data and Statistics on Monday 3 November to discuss which sources of data can be added to future releases. I will be more than happy to provide a fuller response to the committee's question after this meeting.

If you wish to discuss anything included here further or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Robert Jones

Dr. Robert Jones  
School of Law and Politics  
Cardiff University

21 October 2025

Dear Dr. Jones,

### Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release

Thank you for bringing the publication of the Welsh Justice Data to our attention. Whilst we welcome the publication of this data, we would appreciate if you could provide further clarification about the missing data and possible implications of the gaps in datasets.

#### Clarification on missing data

Could you specify which datasets from the original list of 'priority areas' were not included in the Ministry of Justice's release?

Can you provide a breakdown of the most critical data gaps (e.g. parental imprisonment, deaths in custody, Welsh-speaking prisoners) and why they matter for scrutiny and policy?

Were any of the omissions due to data not being collected at all, or simply not being published?

#### Implications of the gaps

What are the practical consequences of not having access to these missing datasets for researchers and policymakers?

How do these gaps affect our understanding of criminal justice, especially in areas like racial disproportionality or women's imprisonment?

#### Next steps

We would also appreciate if you could outline your expectations or recommendations for future data releases?

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

# Agenda Item 5

Welsh Parliament  
Citizen Engagement Team

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny Engagement Findings

October 2025



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# Engagement Summary

The following engagement summary offers an overview of the engagement programme design, delivery, and key findings.

## Background

- 1.** The Equality and Social Justice Committee is conducting post-legislative scrutiny into the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act).
- 2.** The Committee wished to hear directly from people across Wales to understand if they felt the Act had delivered on its promises since it gained Royal Assent in 2015.
- 3.** The Citizen Engagement Team facilitated a programme of engagement with young people, community groups, and visitors to the Senedd, via focus groups, interviews, and creative engagement methods. This report summarises the perspectives shared by the participants.

## Objectives

- 4.** The objective of the engagement programme was to capture people's views, balancing geographic coverage and meaningful representation of different demographic groups and communities, on the following inquiry terms of reference:
  - How far the intended objective of the Act is being achieved; and
  - any actions which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation.

## Methodology

- 5.** The engagement programme used a qualitative research approach to capture practical stories about how life is (or is not) improving and to test the seven Well-being Goals and five Ways of Working in the Act, alongside priorities in the Future Generations Report 2025 and the Cymru Can 2030 Strategy.



## Data collection methods:

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**6.** Focus groups and interviews were held face-to-face, online, and by phone, with contributions in both English and Welsh

- **Focus groups:** Held with young people, adults, community groups, and under-represented voices (such as coastal, rural and valley communities, disabled people, and people with lived experience of disadvantage).
- **Interviews:** Offered to young people who preferred to speak privately.

**7.** Creative methods were used to make engagement accessible, spark imagination, and involve a wider pool of participants:



*Flags for the Future* asked young participants to write or draw their hopes for the future of children growing up in Wales over the next 10, 20 or 50 years.

*Postcards from the Future* invited visitors to the Senedd to select a postcard linked to one of the seven Well-being Goals and describe Wales in 2030 and beyond, and how it got there. Postcards were then pegged to the display.

## Participants

**8.** A purposive sampling approach was used to source participants through working with schools, third sector organisations, and charities. The engagement programme targeted a broad cross-section of people, including:

- Young people.
- Young people with experience of (or aspiration to undertake) apprenticeships.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Adults of all ages.
- Coastal and rural communities.
- Valleys and urban communities.
- Disabled people.
- Individuals with lived experience of social or economic disadvantage.
- People experiencing vulnerability or inequality.

**9.** A total of **324** people took part in the engagement programme. **21** engagement sessions with **151** total participants were delivered. A total of **173** Postcards from the Future were completed by visitors to the Senedd. Further information can be found in the annex section at the end of this report.

## Accessibility and Ethical Considerations

**10.** The engagement programme adhered to the standards set out in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and complied with relevant data protection and safeguarding legislation to ensure the ethical treatment and privacy of all participants.

**11.** To ensure accessibility, engagement activities were designed in plain language, and Easy Read participant guides were provided. Participants could register their interest in taking part either online or by completing the form with the help of a Commission staff member over the phone.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the programme of engagement, particularly the young people who spoke with maturity and dignity.

# Executive Summary

## **Chapter 1: Climate and Nature**

Participants acknowledged real progress in recycling services, community clean-ups, greening schemes, and investment in renewable energy and sustainable transport, which fostered pride and a sense of shared responsibility. National parks, woodlands, and coastal areas were valued for both conservation and tourism, and new flood defences were seen as protecting homes effectively. Yet concerns often outweighed positives. Waste systems were inconsistent and poorly resourced, while antisocial behaviour and visitor pressures undermined community efforts. People worried about the loss of green space to housing, fragile habitats under strain, and biodiversity decline linked to fires and land management changes. Flooding, pollution, and sewage discharges were described as urgent and damaging, eroding trust in public bodies. Transport was widely seen as unreliable and inaccessible, particularly for disabled and rural residents, and debates around renewable energy projects highlighted concerns about fairness, consent, and the long-term balance with nuclear power.

## **Chapter 2: Health and Well-being**

Participants praised children's hospitals, community initiatives, and charities that provided supportive and compassionate care, showing how services could transform lives when accessible and consistent. Parks, leisure centres, grassroots clubs, and community gardens were also valued for promoting both physical and mental health, while free school meals and some discount schemes helped reduce barriers. However, long waiting times in health and care services dominated concerns, with many describing delays for treatment, diagnosis, and mental health support. Access to GPs was difficult, rural journeys long and costly, and disabled people faced added exclusion. Sport and leisure opportunities were often fragile, with facilities under threat, young adults, especially girls, facing limited options, and widespread safety concerns discouraging use of public spaces. Rising costs for leisure, transport, and healthy food restricted participation. Underused or poorly maintained facilities left many—especially teenagers and older people—without safe or welcoming places to gather.

## **Chapter 3: Culture and the Welsh Language**

Participants expressed pride in Welsh identity, heritage sites, festivals, and cultural traditions, with the Eisteddfod and Welsh-medium education seen as central to sustaining the language. Schools were praised for normalising Welsh

in daily life, and adult learners described how gaining the language deepened their sense of belonging and patriotism. Community groups and coastal towns where Welsh was still heard were valued for keeping the language visible in everyday life. However, concerns were strong about uneven access to cultural events, high costs, and declining funding, with some feeling alienated in areas where Welsh language and culture were less prominent. Young people described bullying or social pressures that discouraged use outside school, while adults noted that learning opportunities were often inaccessible, inflexible, or intimidating. Participants feared Welsh risked becoming a language of education only, further weakened by second homes, English-dominant media, and limited visibility in business.

#### **Chapter 4: The Economy and Jobs**

Participants recognised positive steps in schools and colleges, where careers advisers, teachers, and outreach events gave young people guidance and highlighted apprenticeships as increasingly respected alternatives to university. Volunteering, part-time work, and tailored local support schemes were also valued for building skills and confidence. Yet careers advice was often inconsistent and too generic, leaving many unaware of realistic opportunities. Apprenticeships were widely seen as desirable but scarce, particularly in rural areas, and access was sometimes reliant on personal connections. Local economies were described as fragile, with coastal and rural areas reliant on seasonal tourism, farming under severe strain, and town centres in decline. Rising house prices and planning restrictions made it harder for younger generations to stay local, fuelling frustration that policy favoured tourism over sustainable industry. Transport costs, insecure jobs, and systemic barriers for disabled people reinforced exclusion, leaving many without fair or accessible routes into work.

#### **Chapter 5: Impact and Implementation**

Awareness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act was generally low, with most participants only learning about it during the focus groups. Once explained, its ambitions were welcomed, but people judged its impact more by whether they felt listened to and included in decisions. Positive examples, such as Swansea Council's work with older people and Torfaen's volunteer-led co-production project, showed how collaboration could build trust, empowerment, and practical results even within tight financial limits. Yet these successes were described as exceptions. More often, participants felt their views were ignored, with consultations seen as tokenistic and decisions on housing, environment, or

local services made without genuine involvement. Financial rules and short-term budgeting cycles were said to undermine long-term thinking, driving wasteful spending and leaving services fragile. Many feared that without deeper commitment to the Act's principles, systemic pressures would risk collapse across schools, councils, and health boards.

## **Participants' Priorities for the Well-being Act**

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Links to the Well-being Goals:

1. **A Resilient Wales:** Participants valued tree planting, cared-for woodlands, national parks, cultural landscapes, and renewable energy as long-term investments in resilience. Yet fragile habitats, biodiversity loss, pollution and wildfire risks, housing pressures, insecure farming, overstretched health services, and short-term financial rules left communities uncertain about their future resilience.
2. **A Healthier Wales:** Access to parks, leisure centres, cultural activities, and active travel routes was closely tied to well-being, and supportive staff and local initiatives showed services can be transformative. But years-long NHS waits, overstretched A&E, high costs for food and sport, unsafe public spaces, pollution, poor transport, and erosion of trust in institutions undermined people's ability to live healthily. Participants also called for more sustainable food systems.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Disabled participants described exclusion across recycling, transport, health and employment. Rural residents faced higher costs and fewer opportunities; carers felt unsupported; older people experienced ageist assumptions. Inequalities in access to culture, apprenticeships, housing and services revealed a gap between equality in principle and practice.
4. **A Prosperous Wales:** Apprenticeships, skilled pathways, renewable energy, creative industries and tourism were valued, but local economies often relied on insecure seasonal jobs; farming was under strain; town centres declined; and housing was increasingly unaffordable. Short-term budgeting and fragmented systems were seen to weaken Wales's capacity for shared prosperity.
5. **A Cohesive Wales:** Volunteering, youth clubs, festivals and cultural groups built connection, trust and pride when supported. However, closures of community facilities, antisocial behaviour, uneven provision

and tokenistic consultations weakened cohesion. Safe, inclusive, accessible spaces—physical and cultural—were seen as vital to community life.

6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** People questioned whether Wales's footprint matched its ambitions, citing exported waste, unsustainable supply chains for renewables, and the credibility of international commitments. At the same time, bilingual identity and cultural distinctiveness—and clearer pathways into science, energy and digital sectors—were viewed as assets for Wales's global contribution.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Welsh-medium education, cultural traditions, festivals and everyday use of the language underpinned pride and identity. Yet cost barriers, weaker visibility in some communities, “drop-off” after school, inaccessible adult learning, declining provision and patchy digital promotion raised concerns about sustaining culture and language for the long term.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities:

1. **Long-term:** Renewable energy, flood defences, affordable housing, Welsh-medium education, cultural investment and stable local economies were seen as essential long-term priorities. Short-term funding cycles, year-end spending rules and reactive fixes made decisions feel insufficiently strategic.
2. **Prevention:** Participants emphasised prevention across systems—clearing drains to reduce flooding; timely GP access and early mental health support; affordable leisure and healthier food; sustaining community and cultural assets before they decline. Prevention was viewed as cheaper, fairer and more effective than crisis response.
3. **Integration:** Participants highlighted “supercharged actions” delivering multiple wins: clean beaches supporting health, pride and tourism; leisure centres reducing isolation while boosting the local economy; renewables cutting bills while tackling climate change; apprenticeships building skills, resilience and local incomes. They wanted policy and funding that consistently back these interlinked benefits.
4. **Collaboration:** Grassroots volunteers, charities and peer networks are crucial but overstretched when left to carry responsibility alone. Where schools, councils, employers and services worked with communities as

equals—echoing co-production successes—trust and innovation flourished.

5. **Involvement:** The weakest area across themes. From healthcare design and energy siting to cultural provision and local planning, many felt unheard or excluded—especially disabled people, rural residents, carers and low-income families. Fairness and genuine inclusion were seen as essential for the Act's ambitions to succeed.

# Engagement Findings

This section sets out the views shared by participants. It is organised around the five themes: Climate and Nature; Health and Well-being; Culture and the Welsh Language; Economy and Jobs; and Impact and Implementation.

## Climate and Nature

The theme of Climate and Nature is divided into four sub-themes: **waste, recycling and public space; green spaces and biodiversity; water quality, rivers, coasts and flood management; and energy, transport and the transition.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

### Waste, Recycling & Cleanliness of Public Spaces

#### What is working well

**12.** Participants across Wales recognised improvements in recycling. Young participants highlighted how households *“already separate their waste, everyone is on board with the recycling bags, we all make an effort”*. Others described Wales as having *“excellent recycling services... when it’s set up properly, people will play their part”*.

**13.** Participants from Newport praised their city as *“great at recycling”*, while a participant in Conwy explained, *“We are at the forefront here in Conwy... we have a service in our village once a month to recycle big items like washing machines, etc”*.

**14.** Across Wales, participants described a strong sense of community pride in caring for local spaces. In coastal towns, participants highlighted regular beach cleans as essential for supporting tourism, with one young participant explaining: *“Quite a few beach clean-ups happen in our area... the beaches look neater now”*. Rural areas spoke about litter-picking groups and volunteering that kept villages tidy and gave participants a sense of shared ownership. For many, these efforts were about more than the visible results; they created bonds between neighbours, gave participants a sense of agency, and reinforced local pride.

## What isn't working well

**15.** Participants felt strongly about the varying types of household refuse collection systems. Many claimed that the cost of new refuse trucks and household recycling bags was not managed well. Disabled participants described the difficulties in paying for replacement recycling boxes, purposely designed for disabled people, but often broken when handled roughly by refuse collectors. The biggest concern overall related to the collection systems:

*"Why is it that different authorities have different collection bins? Some...let you put everything into one bin; in others, you have to separate things, and they all go to the same place. It's terrible. They should have one system. In Cardiff, there's a blue box, a blue bag, a red bag, a green bin, black bin. It's ridiculous."*

**16.** Frustration over bins was widespread. Overflowing, poorly placed, and too few bins were a common complaint, with *"rubbish and broken glass left scattered on the ground and public footpaths, St Mellons in Cardiff is really bad"*.

**17.** Experiences varied across regions. Coastal and tourist towns reported particular strain from visitor numbers. In tourist hotspots, the problem was magnified as bins filled rapidly in summer, leaving councils unable to keep up. Participants from coastal areas described *"plastic bags full of waste on the side of the road and rubbish everywhere"*, highlighting the inability of the community to manage the additional waste.

**18.** Participants described how progress was repeatedly undermined by antisocial behaviour and environmental damage. Reports of bin fires, vandalism, dog fouling, and illegal dumping were common frustrations.

## Green Space and Biodiversity

### What is working well

**19.** Participants across Wales celebrated visible signs of *"greening"* in their communities. They described new trees, planters, wildflower areas, and cared-for parks, linking these changes to pride, well-being, and *"more planting of wildlife flowers...that's good for the bees"*.

**20.** Urban participants valued planting and small green pockets in otherwise built-up areas. A participant from Newport reflected: *"We've got some lovely*

*green spaces... even though we're a concrete jungle*". Even modest planting was said to make towns feel healthier and more liveable.

**21.** National parks and woodlands were also praised as important spaces for both conservation and tourism, provided they were properly maintained:

*"...climate and nature are all about our local wildlife...and doing whatever we can to support the animals...We're lucky that the National Park is looked after really well, and the coastal paths are kept in good condition too. The woodlands get cared for as well, and all of that brings in tourism, which helps our local economy."*

### **What isn't working well**

**22.** Participants raised strong concerns about the loss of green space to housing and infrastructure projects. Several described large areas of woodland or open land being turned into estates, leaving towns and villages dominated by concrete and traffic. These changes were seen as especially damaging in fast-growing urban centres:

*"I'm worried about our local area, they're going to build more houses...It's going to turn from green to concrete. A decision like this makes life more difficult for people. It takes a large green area away from people. Damaging...nature to turn it into concrete."*

**23.** Some participants expressed anxiety about fragile habitats under pressure from visitor numbers. The Snowdon Lily was mentioned as symbolic of what could be lost, with rising footfall seen as putting irreplaceable ecosystems at risk. *"No one wants to see the Snowdon Lily disappear... there is a risk that it will disappear forever"*. This captured a broader tension between sustaining the visitor economy and protecting the very landscapes that draw people in.

**24.** Participants from valley communities highlighted the loss of biodiversity and landscape damage due to deliberate fires, with one participant recalling: "Near where I live, we have had many fires on the mountain... it went on for weeks".

**25.** Some rural participants claimed that the *"National Trust is winding down sheep counts to focus on nature and carbon footprint."* Grazing was framed as essential land management. Participants argued that cutting sheep numbers

lets vegetation run away, so habitats get “choked,” wildfire risk rises, and birdlife declines. As one put it:

*“They’ve let plants grow on the mountain while reducing the number of sheep grazing... this is going to cause big fires.”*

**26.** Others stressed that “when the mountains were being grazed, it has been proven that the birds were there... they thought that by boosting vegetation growth it would promote biodiversity, but [the hills] have been choked instead.”

## Water Quality, Rivers, Coasts & Flood Management

### What is working well

**27.** Some participants described visible improvements in water environments. In parts of Wales, some rivers and lakes were said to be cleaner than before, with one participant noting:

*“I used to go for a walk to the 'Glen' with my grandmother when I was little, and the water didn't look clean enough to go into. But now I sometimes dip my feet in the water with the dogs. It's a lot cleaner.”*

**28.** Coastal participants also pointed to new sea-defence schemes that had successfully protected homes, with one participant reflecting: “...I haven't heard of anyone's houses being flooded since”. Regular beach cleaning initiatives were also welcomed for keeping shorelines safe and attractive:

*“A lot of campaigns have been going on to pick up litter from the beaches. The local council organises these. We see a difference as the beaches look neater now.”*

### What isn't working well

**29.** Conflicting priorities emerged around sea-defence schemes. While some welcomed them for protecting homes, others argued that the changes altered the character of beaches that local tourism depended on. As one participant put it: “We're in a tourism town... hoteliers are complaining... but I don't want to be flooded in the winter”.

**30.** Despite these improvements, flooding remained one of the most urgent concerns, both in rural and urban regions. One participant described the following experience:

*"...we have a lot of flooding. Recently, the whole street was flooded, and the water was up to people's waists. It was so deep that I had to carry my brother on my shoulders to go down the street to get food. The problem was that the council hadn't cleaned the drains for a long time. That is what caused the flooding, and so everyone had to try to lift the drains to unblock them and remove the leaves. Every shop was destroyed on the first floor, even the pharmacy, so some people had to go without medicine. I remember there were people on the rugby field in kayaks and canoes, because the water was so deep. I remember the rugby club lost everything on the first floor. We had sandbags in the street for 4 months after the floods."*

**31.** Water pollution was another widespread frustration, which participants described as *"diabolical and shameful"*. Participants reported sewage discharges and rubbish in rivers, which undermined trust in water companies and regulators.

*"The Ely River is terrible. You see bikes, bags and rubbish floating in it. They've put up barriers to stop people dumping, and bollards to stop the trash, but it hasn't worked. There's even a spot where you could dive in, but it's unusable because the water is so dirty."*

## Energy, Transport & the Transition

### What is working well

**32.** Participants highlighted visible progress in renewable energy, often pointing to solar panels on schools, public buildings, and farms. One remarked: *"Solar panels should be everywhere... car park roofs and public buildings"*. Small-scale hydro schemes were also welcomed, seen as contributing to the shift away from fossil fuels without damaging landscapes.

**33.** In transport, participants noticed steps such as electric buses and new cycle lanes in some urban centres. These investments were taken as signs that Wales was committed to tackling climate change, even if delivery remained uneven.

### What isn't working well

**34.** Many participants felt that public transport across Wales falls short, with unsafe and unconnected cycle lanes proving not to be a viable alternative. Participants suggested that poor public transport is leading to congestion:

*“I think traffic is worsening; it seems like people just aren’t using public transport...I’m noticing the problems with buses, such as timetables. I wonder if poor public transport is encouraging people to drive into the city centre.”*

**35.** In rural and coastal areas, participants were frustrated with unreliable bus services, long waits, and routes that required unnecessary changes: *“buses aren’t reliable... the connectivity is a problem,”* one participant explained.

**36.** Disabled participants described repeated exclusion from buses that would not stop, to inaccessible walking and cycling routes. For them, the lack of reliable and inclusive alternatives meant that climate-friendly transport options felt out of reach.

**37.** Energy transition also raised new dilemmas. While participants broadly supported renewable projects, energy parks or turbines placed near housing estates without community consent angered some participants.

**38.** Many participants raised concerns over the viability of electric cars and the environmental trade-offs in producing solar and wind infrastructure:

*“Wales isn’t ready for mass electric cars, the charging network is thin, grid upgrades are lagging, and many of us can’t charge at home. I also want guarantees that battery minerals are sourced responsibly, because cobalt and lithium supply chains carry real human-rights and environmental risks.”*

**39.** Some participants voiced concerns over Wales’ energy preparedness for the future, claiming that clean energy sources are not as effective and future-proof as nuclear:

*“Nuclear is still our only viable option. Let’s be honest about the whole-life footprint of a single wind turbine; steel, concrete, and maintenance of the infrastructure still need energy sourced from fossil fuels. So show, with numbers, that the clean power payback outweighs those inputs.”*

## Participants' Priorities for the Well-being Act

### Links to the Well-being Goals

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1. **A Resilient Wales:** Participants valued biodiversity gains through new planting, wildflower areas, and cared-for woodlands. Yet fears of biodiversity loss, wildfire risks, and fragile habitats revealed how vulnerable communities still feel.
2. **A Healthier Wales** was reflected in accounts of green space, cleaner environments, and active travel routes that supported wellbeing. Conversely, pollution, unsafe cycling networks, and dirty rivers undermine health outcomes.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Disabled participants highlighted exclusion from recycling systems, transport, and emergency planning. These experiences revealed where the Act's ambition for equality is not yet embedded in delivery.
4. **A Prosperous Wales:** Tourism was recognised as important for jobs and local economies, but participants described how it also strained habitats, infrastructure, and community wellbeing.
5. **A Cohesive Wales:** Community volunteering, such as litter picks and beach cleans, built pride and social connection. Yet antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and lack of community influence undermined cohesion.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Concerns about waste exported abroad, unsustainable resource use, and global supply chains left some participants doubting whether Wales's international impact matched its ambitions.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Natural spaces were valued not only for biodiversity but also for cultural identity and sense of place, reinforcing their role in sustaining local heritage and pride.

### Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Prioritise

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1. **Long-term:** Participants welcomed renewable energy, tree planting, and flood defences as essential long-term investments. These were seen as future-proofing Wales against climate risks. However,

neglected drains and reliance on short-term fixes left people doubting whether policy was truly strategic. *(Links to Cymru Can's missions on energy transition and sustainable land use.)*

2. **Prevention:** People stressed that routine maintenance, such as clearing drains and rivers, would prevent flooding and costly damage. They also valued prevention through behaviour change; fostering pride and ownership was seen as more effective than cleaning up after damage. *(Aligns with Cymru Can's call for prevention funding in areas like flood management and waste systems.)*
3. **Integration:** Participants recognised how single actions brought multiple benefits, cleaner beaches boosted health, tourism, and local pride; tree planting enhanced biodiversity and community connection; renewable energy reduced bills and created jobs. These were described as "supercharged actions." *(Reflects Cymru Can's emphasis on joined-up action across food resilience, biodiversity, and energy transition.)*
4. **Collaboration:** Volunteering and community action were central, but participants emphasised that responsibility should not fall solely on them. They wanted councils, businesses, and government to share accountability, to rebuild trust in decision-making. *(Links to Cymru Can's mission on community empowerment and shared responsibility for resilience.)*
5. **Involvement:** This was described as the weakest area. From energy siting to emergency planning, participants felt unheard, with disabled groups in particular excluded from decisions and services. Genuine involvement and fairness were seen as essential for the Act to succeed. *(Connects directly to Cymru Can's focus on fairness and inclusive decision-making in the energy transition and public services.)*

## Health and Well-being

The theme of Health and Well-being is divided into four sub-themes: **health and care services; active and green spaces, and sport; transport, access and cost; and community, support, and safety.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

## Health and Care Services

### What is working well

**40.** Participants described moments when health services worked well and made a real difference. Children’s hospitals were praised for creating “*really supportive environments*” where staff went the extra mile. Community initiatives such as *The Hangout* and *Dusty Forge* were valued for offering free, accessible mental health support, while peer networks and charities were credited with “*stepping in where the NHS couldn’t*”. These examples reassured participants that when services were consistent and compassionate, they could be transformative.

### What isn’t working well

**41.** The most consistent concern was long waiting times across all health services. In A&E, waits of 10–15 hours were described as routine. Several described waiting years for treatment, with one participant saying bluntly: “*I’ve been waiting for treatment for three years. And I’m still waiting*”. Another participant described the waiting times for a neurodivergent diagnosis and support:

*“A family member of mine had to wait 12 months just to get an emergency appointment, and even then, the diagnosis can take up to four years. The demand for these services is so high, but unfortunately, the services haven’t kept up with that. It’s frustrating because mental health is just as important as physical health, and it’s becoming harder for people to get the help they need when they need it.”*

**42.** Mental health services were often available only at the point of crisis. Participants felt conditions were dismissed unless severe. Disabled participants described additional barriers: letters arriving only in print, apps that did not work with assistive technology, and a sense that “*it takes away your dignity*”.

**43.** Access to GPs added another layer of frustration. Participants described the “*Russian roulette*” of phoning at 8.00 am, with appointments disappearing within minutes: “*not everyone can do that*”.

**44.** Older participants felt written off by ageist assumptions that “*everyone over the age of 50 is grouped together. But a healthy 60-year-old is very different to an 80-year-old with care needs.*” While carers highlighted the strain of rising social care costs and lack of follow-up support:

*“Timely access to medical services is the foundation stone...We need to remove those barriers if we want people to age well. There are so many forgotten older people, people in total isolation, and it’s not self-inflicted. They’ve just lost the people around them.”*

**45.** Rural participants stressed the difficulty of distance, with some journeys to hospital involving multiple buses or hours of travel:

*“Gwynedd is 100 miles long with one hospital in Bangor. For some people, that makes it really hard to get there. In Conwy, it’s 50 miles from top to bottom, it can take two or three bus journeys, and you have to plan to be there all day, sometimes just for a ten-minute appointment.”*

**46.** Participants pointed to the closure of cottage hospitals and maternity units, alongside overstretched A&E departments. In these spaces, charities and voluntary groups often *“picked up the pieces,”* but many questioned how sustainable this was.

## **Active and Green Spaces, and Sport**

### **What is working well**

**47.** Participants highlighted a wide variety of opportunities to stay active in their communities. Parks, green spaces, and community areas were consistently described as vital for both physical fitness and mental health. Football pitches, tennis courts, leisure centres, outdoor gyms, riverside paths, and green corridors such as the Sirhowy Valley were all described as vital assets. For many, access to natural spaces was closely tied to fitness and mental health. As one participant explained:

*“There are lots of parks and green areas where I live, which are really good for running, which links to the environment and keeping well.”*

**48.** Community-led initiatives also played a key role. Môn Girls Run was praised for combining physical activity with social connection, giving participants routine, exercise, and the chance to talk afterwards. Local clubs and leisure facilities were described as offering *“a lot of opportunities to keep healthy”*. Urban participants particularly valued large facilities such as velodromes and

libraries, while rural participants emphasised the importance of paths, proms, and accessible green routes.

**49.** Community gardens and local markets were praised for bringing people together and supporting healthier living. Youth clubs and initiatives aimed at reducing antisocial behaviour were valued, showing that when investment and care were present, people felt safer and more connected:

*"They've just started a children's club in our town to try to reduce anti-social behaviour. They offer sports activities, and it's free, which is nice."*

### **What isn't working well**

**50.** Concerns centred on the fragility of these assets. Some facilities were seen as vulnerable to closure or neglect, with leisure centres and libraries under threat. Rural participants emphasised underinvestment in community buildings and neglected facilities such as football pitches

**51.** Young people emphasised that opportunities for sport dropped off sharply after age 16, particularly for girls. As one participant put it:

*"[There's a] lack of opportunities for young adults to get into sports. A lot of clubs stop accepting people after the age of 16, which is really limiting, especially for girls. Many girls drop out of sports between the ages of 12 and 14, so by the time they're older, it's hard to get back into it. I personally felt the impact of this because, when I was in school, I wasn't allowed to play football. I didn't have the chance to develop in that environment, which held me back in a way."*

**52.** Safety concerns were also strongly expressed. Despite valuing green spaces, many participants said they avoided parks and community facilities because of antisocial behaviour, drug use, and harassment:

*"Where I live, it's quite dangerous to go out; there are a lot of drug dealers, and dangerous stuff happens. By my street, someone got stabbed in the head. It makes me feel like I need to be careful about where I go, who I speak to, and what time I go out. It's quite sad. If you don't feel safe going out, then you're never going to go out to exercise or meet friends."*

**53.** Urban, young participants frequently highlighted feeling unsafe in city centres, from drug use to street harassment:

*“Even in the city centre, you see so many druggies and paedophiles, anything could happen to you. We need to feel safe when we go out...There’s a street...with lots of Shawarma cafes and stuff. There’s always windows being smashed in. When I walk around it’s so dangerous there, with so many men coming up to me and my friends saying “oh you’re so pretty”, it’s gross.”*

**54.** Older participants also described avoiding parks and public spaces altogether, saying they felt unsafe or intimidated and “won’t go out on their own. So there’s not a lot for them”.

**55.** These concerns reinforced a broader point: without safe, affordable, and accessible options, it becomes far harder for people to maintain healthy lifestyles. Participants repeatedly stressed that access was not only about facilities existing, but also whether people could afford to join, feel welcome, and get there safely.

## **Transport, Access and Cost**

### **What is working well**

**56.** Some participants welcomed initiatives that reduced pressure on household budgets. Free school meals were repeatedly highlighted as a particularly valuable support, both for children’s health and for easing family costs. Others pointed to positive examples where cost and access had been addressed locally. Discounted leisure centre passes for college students were especially valued, as were schemes that opened up school gyms to the wider community and free outdoor facilities.

*“...we’ve got two leisure centres that are easy to get to and affordable, which is great because it makes it accessible for a lot of people. There are also a lot of outdoor areas where people can get out and be active for free, whether they’re walking their dogs or out running...they offer a lot of opportunities for people to stay healthy.”*

**57.** In a few rural areas, door-to-door bus services were praised as a model that worked well, helping those without cars to reach activities and health services. These examples were seen as small but significant ways of reducing barriers.

## What isn't working well

**58.** For most, however, affordability and transport remained significant obstacles. Leisure centre memberships, swimming sessions, and sports clubs were described as prohibitively expensive, especially for large families. Paying for swimming, football, or other activities for several children quickly became unsustainable.

*"Money can be a problem for some people, especially when they have to pay for swimming, and they are paying for all their kids, and they have a big family. The cost of a leisure centre membership a month for a student is £33 a month, which I think is a lot."*

**59.** Young people also criticised inconsistent discount schemes. Those still in school at 18 described being excluded from discounts available to college students, which they described as inequitable and demotivating. Older participants stressed that rising prices excluded those on low incomes, increasing isolation and limiting participation in community life.

**60.** Transport was described as an equally critical barrier. Rural participants saw fares as prohibitively expensive. A young participant explained:

*"As I live in the middle of nowhere, if I'm going to do something, I have to pay for a bus there, pay to go to the gym, and pay for a bus home. It doesn't feel worth it."*

**61.** Urban participants noted fares were still far higher than elsewhere in the UK. *"The buses are expensive here... If you're under 19 in Brighton you pay 50p, but here I pay £3-£4 each time"*. High train fares further restricted opportunities, particularly for those needing to travel between towns.

**62.** Healthy eating was seen as particularly difficult; fruit and vegetables were described as *"too expensive,"* while unhealthy food remained cheap and widely available.

## Community, Support, and Safety

### What is working well

**63.** Community spaces were highly valued when they were available and accessible. Libraries, community centres, and charities were praised for offering safe, welcoming environments, particularly for young people:

*“There’s a youth charity...which not only helps you with your mental health, but they cover arts, hip-hop, singing, dance, everything. Most children and teenagers want to take part in these sorts of things, and there are so many benefits for their mental health. It’s free, which means no one is excluded.”*

**64.** In some areas, community-led initiatives were described as positive ways to bring people together, with participants highlighting their role in reducing loneliness and building connections across age groups. Community gardens and local markets also played a role in bringing people together and encouraging healthier lifestyles.

#### **What isn’t working well**

**65.** Participants across Wales felt that many community buildings were under-used and often only targeted at very young children, leaving teenagers and older people with little to do.

*“I haven’t really seen the community centre being used at all, only at election time...there is quite a bit for small children to play, but there is nothing for children that are a bit older or young people like us.”*

**66.** Participants expressed frustration that the provision seemed to decline just as young people needed it most. Older participants also felt left behind; when driving was no longer possible, many struggled to find alternatives for meeting people or staying connected, leading to isolation and declining well-being.

**67.** In rural areas, young people said there were no safe, affordable places to gather, with some resorting to meeting at bus stops, which felt unsafe and exposed them to risk. Participants repeatedly stressed that fear, poor maintenance, and unsafe environments discouraged people from exercising, socialising, or even travelling independently. For some, this contributed directly to isolation and declining well-being.

## **Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act**

### **Links to the Well-being Goals**

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1. **A Healthier Wales:** free school meals, leisure facilities, and compassionate NHS staff supported wellbeing, but participants' accounts of years-long waits and A&E delays underlined how overstretched systems undermine the goal.
2. **A More Equal Wales:** disabled participants faced systemic barriers, carers felt unsupported, and older participants described ageist assumptions, showing that equality in principle was not equality in practice.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** rising costs of food, transport, and leisure eroded wellbeing, especially for families and those on fixed incomes. Participants linked this to basic survival pressures that crowd out opportunities for prosperity.
4. **A Cohesive Wales:** community centres and youth clubs built pride and belonging, but closures, uneven provision, and antisocial behaviour weakened this, leaving participants feeling less connected at the very point cohesion was most needed.
5. **A Resilient Wales:** active travel and green spaces linked health with environmental sustainability, but fragile service provision exposed weak resilience.
6. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** local facilities and cultural activities supported identity and belonging, reinforcing that culture is part of wellbeing, not separate from it.
7. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** surfaced in calls for healthier diets and more sustainable food systems, connecting local wellbeing to global responsibility.

## **Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities**

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1. **Long-term:** Participants stressed the importance of earlier intervention in schools, mental health, and routine care to prevent crises. *"If you don't catch problems early, they spiral into crisis,"* one participant said. People wanted services to look ahead rather than react. (Links to Cymru Can's mission on prevention funding and investment in early support.)
2. **Prevention:** Many called for ring-fenced resources to maintain wellbeing before problems escalate, from timely GP appointments to

accessible counselling and routine health checks. They felt prevention was more cost-effective and humane than crisis management. (Aligns with Cymru Can's focus on funding prevention across health and social care.)

3. **Integration:** Leisure centres, community gardens, and green routes were described as *"lifelines"* because they reduced isolation, supported health, boosted local economies, and built pride. Participants saw these as investments with multiple wins. (Reflects Cymru Can's emphasis on joined-up action across health, economy, and community resilience.)
4. **Collaboration:** Charities, peer groups, and voluntary organisations were essential but overburdened. As one participant put it, *"the NHS should do more, it shouldn't always fall to charities to pick up the pieces."* People wanted stronger roles for councils and statutory services to share responsibility. (Links to Cymru Can's call for stronger collaboration and trust between communities and statutory services.)
5. **Involvement:** Disabled people, rural residents, and carers described poor access and systemic exclusion. They felt *"not listened to"* in how services were designed. Participants argued that fair access and genuine involvement were essential if services were to meet real needs. (Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and inclusive service design.)

## Culture and the Welsh Language

The theme of Culture and the Welsh Language is divided into four sub-themes: **Welsh culture, heritage, and identity; Welsh in schools and young people; lifelong learning and adult education; and Welsh in communities.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

### Welsh Culture, Heritage and Identity

#### What is working well

**68.** Participants expressed pride in Welsh heritage, identity, and cultural assets. Iconic sites such as St Fagans, Margam Park, Hay-on-Wye, and the Big Pit were described as *"uniquely special"*. The Eisteddfod was celebrated as central to

sustaining traditions, and schools were praised for engaging young people through cultural activities.

**69.** Festivals and events were valued as opportunities to showcase heritage, while tourism was seen as a way of sharing Welsh culture more widely. Everyday visibility, bilingual signage, Welsh flags, and markets selling Welsh goods were described as keeping culture alive. National sports and the Welsh anthem were described as powerful expressions of identity:

*"It's important to promote the cultural identity of Wales, the flag, the national sports teams, and being a people who are inclusive but still remember their history. I'm actually from England, but the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I hear the Welsh national anthem".*

#### **What isn't working well**

**70.** Access to cultural life was uneven. Costs were prohibitive, particularly for the Eisteddfod and Maes B, with cuts to cultural funding further reducing provision:

*"I remember the Big Cheese in Caerphilly was good, but now we have the Little Cheese. Now it's just a couple of stalls, when it used to be huge and really good. Now it's terrible. I remember when the whole castle was full of stalls and activities, but now there is almost nothing. I don't go anymore, it's terrible".*

**71.** Concerns about inclusivity were strong. Some non-Welsh speakers or learners felt alienated when events were overwhelmingly Welsh-language focused. People in border or Anglicised regions reported weaker visibility, leaving them feeling disconnected:

*"My school didn't celebrate St David's Day or have an Eisteddfod, so I didn't get the same exposure to Welsh culture that others might have had. The border culture isn't as strong as it is in other parts of Wales. It's a similar situation in areas with lots of second homes, where Welsh culture and language can be less prominent."*

**72.** Younger participants also noted that English-language culture dominated online spaces and media, while Welsh music, film, and arts were less visible and harder to access.

*"I try to find books or music in Welsh, and I enjoy it. There are more things out there than there used to be...But I need to search for it. For example, it is easier to search for a book I like in English than it is to find the book in Welsh. You have to know where to go for Welsh language resources."*

## Welsh in Schools and Young People

### What is working well

**73.** Welsh-medium education was consistently described as the backbone of sustaining the language.

*"To keep the language alive when I'm older, I would send my children to a Welsh language school and speak Welsh at home. It's good that the language of our country is still going, especially bearing in mind the history of the language".*

**74.** Young participants spoke with pride about how Welsh was integrated into daily life, from lessons and homework to sports teams and even gaming. One group of friends explained that when they played Fortnite, they deliberately switched to Welsh so that *"other people don't understand what we're talking about"*.

**75.** This sense of normalisation built confidence, especially for pupils who had started with little or no Welsh. Immersion courses were praised for enabling young people to *"go from nothing to being able to join a Welsh secondary school within two terms"*.

**76.** Families who did not speak Welsh at home were also choosing Welsh-medium schools because they believed it *"opened doors to the language"*. Some young participants described taking pride in teaching siblings or parents a few words so that Welsh became part of family life:

*"My sister and I speak Welsh to each other. Mum can speak Welsh, but Dad can't, so we're teaching Dad a little bit of Welsh. Then he can also help me with schoolwork."*

**77.** There was also enthusiasm for promoting the language through school activities and cultural traditions such as the Eisteddfod, with one pupil acting as

a “*Welsh language ambassador*” to encourage peers. Demand for places in Welsh-medium schools was seen as growing, especially in urban areas where new school buildings were being constructed.

### **What isn't working well**

**78.** Young participants described pressures outside classrooms, where speaking Welsh in mixed groups often felt awkward or even attracted bullies. Some consistently raised anxieties about the “*drop-off*” in language use once they left education. Several admitted they expected to stop speaking Welsh after school because their families used only English at home:

*“When I leave school, I don't think I'll speak Welsh any more because my family doesn't speak Welsh”.*

**79.** These concerns fed into a broader fear that Welsh risked becoming tied too closely to formal education. Young people in border areas and more Anglicised regions described this as especially true, whereas those in North and West Wales noted that the language was still heard in daily life “*across the farms and castle lines*”. But even there, participants recognised that without everyday opportunities beyond the classroom, Welsh could wither as they entered adulthood.

## **Lifelong Learning and Adult Education**

### **What is working well**

**80.** Adults described a clear appetite for learning Welsh, driven by pride, practicality, and identity. Local provision, such as Learning Pembrokeshire, was welcomed for making lessons available within communities. Some described how learning Welsh later in life deepened their sense of patriotism:

*“I'd love to get to conversational Welsh, I've found I feel more patriotic about it as I get older”*

**81.** Others highlighted the value of everyday visibility, saying that even basic skills such as greetings kept the language alive, remarking that “*It's lovely seeing Welsh on road signs every day. It keeps it alive*”.

**82.** In some cases, participants were teaching Welsh, offering online lessons or supporting learners in their workplaces. They suggested that learning was not

only about individual progress but also about creating ripple effects within families, workplaces, and communities.

### What isn't working well

**83.** Sustaining learning as an adult was described as difficult. Accessibility was the dominant issue; many courses were inflexible or unrealistic for those in work, with one participant noting that *“most of these courses require you to go and spend a week in North Wales to do a residential, which I can't do”*.

**84.** There were also concerns about inclusivity and motivation. Participants stressed that provision needed to adapt to different needs, such as learning disabilities, where large formal classes would not be suitable. A wider frustration was about motivation and purpose; participants wanted clearer reasons to learn, since *“much of public life still defaults to English”*

**85.** Confidence was another barrier. Learners often felt shy about speaking outside the classroom, particularly in English-dominant areas such as Pembrokeshire, where one participant admitted:

*“Pembrokeshire's known as ‘Little England beyond Wales’ so it doesn't always feel like there's a big cultural push”.*

## Welsh in Communities

### What is working well

**86.** In coastal towns and rural areas, participants were concerned that Welsh was not heard in shops, farms, and community events, highlighting its declining social presence. Many agreed that the survival and growth of the language depends on its presence, integration and use in the community.

**87.** Community groups were seen as vital in sustaining the language. Welsh speakers from coastal areas described themselves as *“scattered”* and existing in small *“pockets”*. Much effort and planning are needed to bring those *“pockets”* of Welsh speakers together, but when the opportunity arises, it is seen as invaluable.

### What isn't working well

**88.** Participants worried that, beyond strongholds in North and West Wales, Welsh was too often confined to schools and lacked visibility in wider community life. Many young people feared they would stop speaking once they left

education, and adults echoed these concerns, warning that Welsh risked becoming “the language of education only, as is happening in Ireland”.

**89.** Communities with high levels of migration or second homes were seen as particularly fragile, with participants worried that Welsh identity was being diluted:

*“In my village, about 40% of people speak Welsh. Sadly, a lot of people still think the Welsh language is a second-class language...It’s not seen as the language of the home anymore. We have to fight for it or we’ll lose it. There are people who can speak Welsh but don’t, simply because of the surroundings they’re in.”*

**90.** Businesses also faced criticism, with examples of Welsh disappearing from menus and signage. Some participants felt that promotion of the Welsh language was not a priority:

*“If you’re asking how much resource I’d devote to culture and the Welsh language, I’d say it’s down at the bottom of the list right now. That’s just recognising the economic situation of the country. There are so many gaps in important statutory services that culture and the Welsh language just can’t be a high budget priority”.*

## Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

### Links to the Well-being Goals

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1. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Welsh-medium education, cultural traditions, and community groups show the Act’s ambitions in action, embedding pride and belonging. Yet fears of “drop-off” after school, inaccessible adult learning, and the decline of festivals reveal fragility in sustaining culture and language long term.
2. **A Healthier Wales:** Engagement in cultural life, Welsh clubs, and creative activity was repeatedly linked to wellbeing, identity, and mental health. Barriers such as cost, poor transport, or feelings of exclusion risk undermining these benefits.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Inequalities of access remain stark. Learners, low-income families, disabled people, and those in urban or border areas

reported fewer opportunities to use or celebrate the Welsh language and culture.

4. **A Resilient Wales:** Place-based heritage, from landscapes to indigenous place names, strengthened connection and responsibility to the environment. Participants warned that when cultural stories and visibility decline, attachment to place is weakened.
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** Community-led groups, festivals, and bilingual services provided trusted spaces for connection and belonging. Yet their decline, or reliance on overstretched volunteers, risks hollowing out opportunities for cultural cohesion.
6. **A Prosperous Wales:** Participants valued the role of culture, bilingualism, and the creative industries in supporting jobs, tourism, and local economies. However, weak promotion, digital invisibility, and patchy provision risk limiting Wales's ability to realise the economic potential of its cultural assets.
7. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Wales's culture and bilingual identity were seen as powerful tools for soft power and international reputation. Yet participants felt that limited global promotion, lack of investment, and declining cultural infrastructure reduced the country's ability to project its distinctiveness confidently on the world stage.

## **Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities**

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1. **Long-term:** The decline in Welsh use beyond school was seen as a warning against short-termism. Participants called for continuity from education through adulthood, workplaces, and community life. *(Links to Cymru Can's mission on long-term cultural investment and the 2025 Report's call for durable infrastructure rather than short-lived provision.)*
2. **Prevention:** Everyday opportunities, from community groups, clubs and signage, were valued as preventative measures against language loss and cultural decline. Cuts to arts, festivals, and adult provision were described as undermining this. *(Aligns with Cymru Can's focus on prevention funding for cultural and community infrastructure.)*
3. **Integration:** Participants highlighted that language and culture cannot be separated from wider systems: affordability, transport, digital

promotion, and community infrastructure were all interdependent. *(Reflects Cymru Can's mission on integration across social, economic, and cultural systems.)*

4. **Collaboration:** Volunteer-run hubs and community partnerships showed the value of collaboration. But sustainability was questioned, where statutory services retreated and volunteers were left to carry the load. *(Links to Cymru Can's call for shared responsibility and partnership between communities and public bodies.)*
5. **Involvement:** Young people wanted modern Welsh media, while adults wanted accessible lessons and inclusive events for both learners and non-speakers. *(Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and equality in cultural access, tackling barriers faced by low-income families and disabled adults.)*

## The Economy and Jobs

The theme of Economy and Jobs is divided into three sub-themes: **pathways from school to work and apprenticeships; local economies and housing; and inclusions and barriers to work.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

### Pathways from School to Work and Apprenticeships

#### What is working well

- 91.** Many young participants felt that schools and colleges offered a useful starting point when thinking about future careers. Careers advisers were often described as positive influences, with one young participant explaining that advisers “*come into the school, asking us what we want to be*” and that this helped them “*find the right pathway*”. Teachers were also seen as playing a crucial role when they went beyond subject teaching. A pupil recalled that their teacher “*really helped me with everything from CV writing to interview preparation and job applications,*” although they added that they were “*lucky to have her*”.
- 92.** Careers fairs and outreach events gave pupils valuable insights into different futures, challenging the assumption that university is the only path.

Apprenticeships, once dismissed as a second-best option, were increasingly recognised as legitimate and respected alternatives:

*“There's an increased awareness about the fact that you don't have to go to university. You could get an apprenticeship. Maybe a few years ago, people wouldn't have thought of that or considered it, but there are more options for people now...on social media, you can see people doing law apprenticeships and taking different pathways. You don't have to go to university and then get a job. There are different options that you can take.”*

**93.** Volunteering and part-time jobs, such as lifeguarding or refereeing, were also highlighted as important. Participants emphasised the transferable skills and confidence they gained from these experiences, describing them as useful preparation for work.

#### **What isn't working well**

**94.** Despite these positives, many participants described careers advice as too generic, leaving them uncertain about “*next steps*” or unaware of the full range of opportunities available. Support was said to be patchy and inconsistent, depending heavily on the school, teacher, or local resources. As one participant explained:

*“For many young people, finding part-time jobs or apprenticeships can be difficult...I have a rough idea of what I want to do in the future, but I don't know where to go for advice or where to start looking for opportunities.”*

**95.** Several young people felt that schools still presented A-levels and university as the default route, leaving vocational, creative, or niche careers undervalued. One participant explained: “*I love art and would love to become an artist, but it's not really seen as a viable career option, so I'm looking at something more 'realistic' like engineering.*” Another added that “*some of the brightest kids struggle in the traditional classroom, but that's not always recognised.*”

**96.** A lack of exposure to vocational pathways meant many students could not picture alternative futures for themselves: “*you can't be it if you can't see it.*” This lack of visibility was felt most sharply when young people spoke about apprenticeships, which they often saw as desirable routes but difficult to access

in practice. Participants raised concerns about limited availability and barriers to entry. One explained:

*“There aren't enough apprenticeships; some people who can't get one wait a year and try again...It depends if you have the right grade or if you've had work experience. If not, you have to go in at the lower level and work your way up.”*

**97.** The limited range of apprenticeships was particularly frustrating in rural and coastal areas:

*“There aren't a lot of opportunities...the teacher said it would be better to look for apprenticeships outside of our community. There aren't many apprenticeships here. You have to go to England.”*

**98.** Others pointed out that certain pathways were effectively closed to those without personal connections:

*“If you want to be a carpenter, you've got to know a carpenter who's willing to take you on as an apprentice; otherwise you can't go to college to do an apprenticeship.”*

**99.** Older participants compared current schemes unfavourably with those of the past; *“In the 1970s there were apprenticeships galore... that's not the case now.”* Some even described today's shorter, lower-paid provision as exploitative, with one participant asking: *“Why wouldn't that kid just go out and get a job for minimum wage instead?”*

## Local Economies and Housing

### What is working well

**100.** Seasonal tourism was one of the few consistent sources of employment in coastal areas. Young people described cafés, shops and visitor attractions as reliable ways to earn money in the summer, with one noting that *“there are plenty of part-time jobs available over the summer due to tourism”*.

**101.** Sports facilities also provided valued options, with lifeguarding and refereeing described as well-paid and flexible. Adults emphasised volunteering as another constructive way to fill employment gaps, while local initiatives such

as People First regional support and Access to Work were praised for giving tailored support to those facing barriers.

### **What isn't working well**

**102.** Many participants described their local economies as fragile and limited. In rural and coastal communities, participants spoke of “*retirement islands,*” characterised by older populations and limited opportunities outside of hospitality, agriculture, or care. Skilled or professional jobs in sectors such as engineering were reportedly scarce, forcing many to relocate. One participant explained: “*If we want to come back here and raise children here, there are no jobs that pay well enough to stay here*”

**103.** Participants from both rural and urban areas raised concerns over the health of the farming industry in Wales. Struggles with the rising cost of fuel, feed, and fertiliser, with unpredictable prices for produce, were blamed. Moreover, changes to subsidies and new regulations are creating uncertainty, especially for smaller family farms that rely on stability. Participants spoke of social challenges: many farms are run by older generations with few young people able to take over, finding workers is increasingly difficult, and the stress of all these pressures is affecting farmers' well-being:

*“We’re being squeezed from every side, costs are up, rules are changing, and the weather is against us. It sometimes feels like farming has no future for the next generation.”*

**104.** In the Valleys, participants described the hollowing out of industries, saying that “*there’s just no industry left anymore*”. Even where jobs existed, they were often insecure, low-paid or short-term, leaving little chance of stability. Adults linked this directly to the decline of town centres, pointing to high business rates and competition from out-of-town shops:

*“Business rates are killing our shops, they’re so high that lots of places are closing, and more will follow. Shops on the edge of town are paying lower rates and making money, while high street shops are paying much more. Town centres are dying: look at Newport or Bangor, where even charity shops are closing because there’s no footfall. How can the Welsh Government support our town centres with fairer business rates, so we actually have them in the future? This is about supporting the economy and local jobs. We should scrap*

*town business rates and increase the out-of-town ones, because a dead town centre impacts both the economy and the community*

**105.** Housing pressures compounded these challenges. Rising house prices, fuelled by retirees and second-home buyers, meant younger people could not afford to stay local. One participant explained: *“A ‘2 up 2 down’ cottage in Conwy is... almost £300,000. Our son...still lives with us... it’s not good for him”*.

**106.** Strict planning rules in National Parks were also criticised for preventing younger generations from buying or building locally. Many expressed frustration that policy choices seemed to favour tourism over sustainable industries, with one participant arguing: *“We are wasting ourselves making this a playground for tourists. All we can offer are jobs in cafés”*.

## **Inclusion and Barriers to Work**

### **What is working well**

**107.** There were positive examples of inclusive employment, with organisations like Guide Dogs deliberately employing visually impaired people and making adjustments to ensure meaningful work. Access to Work was described by some as a lifeline, covering salary costs or specialist equipment, while supportive managers were credited with making a big difference, particularly where mentoring or one-to-one support was provided in the early weeks of a job.

### **What isn’t working well**

**108.** For most participants, however, the dominant story was one of barriers and exclusion. Transport was the most consistent frustration, with rural and valley participants describing unreliable, expensive and patchy services. A return bus fare from the Valleys to Cardiff was said to cost around £15, making opportunities unaffordable. Others noted that *“there’s no transport on a Sunday – like from Pembrokeshire to Tenby. It’s just not doable without a car”*.

**109.** Disabled participants described systemic barriers at every stage. Recruitment processes were seen as exclusionary, with one participant saying: *“If you tick the disability box, you don’t get the job. You just go to the bottom of the list”*. Even when disabled participants had the qualifications and experience, disclosure was said to *“shut the door”* on opportunities. Others spoke of employers unwilling to make reasonable adjustments, as one explained:

*“Employer support is really important. Most managers aren’t equipped to deal with the complexities of employing someone with disabilities, but with the right help, like 1:1 support in the first few weeks; we can work, we want to work, and we can contribute. There’s a whole workforce out there that isn’t being used, and schemes like Access to Work just don’t go far enough.”*

## Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

### Links to the Well-being Goals

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1. **A Healthier Wales:** Employment was repeatedly tied to confidence, identity, and mental health. Volunteering, apprenticeships, and part-time jobs gave young people purpose and skills, yet precarious contracts, poor transport, and exclusion of disabled people undermined wellbeing.
2. **A More Equal Wales:** Inequalities were stark across geographical differences, disability, gender, and income. Access to apprenticeships depended on personal contacts; disabled people faced systemic barriers in recruitment; and rural and coastal youths described being priced out of jobs and homes in their own communities.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** Participants valued apprenticeships, skilled pathways, and local industries, but lamented their scarcity. Heavy reliance on tourism and insecure service-sector work left local economies vulnerable, stalling aspirations for prosperity.
4. **A Resilient Wales:** Housing unaffordability and second-home pressures were seen as eroding not only opportunities but also the cultural and linguistic fabric of communities, weakening their long-term resilience.
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** Where role models, outreach, or local schemes worked, they created trusted, supportive spaces. Yet geographic inequality and declining industries risk young people leaving, fracturing community cohesion.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Young people highlighted the importance of industries such as energy, science, and digital, connecting local ambitions to global responsibility. However, the lack of

visible pathways in these fields left many feeling excluded from contributing.

7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Creative, vocational, and Welsh-language pathways were valued for identity and pride. Yet cultural careers were often dismissed as “unrealistic,” making futures in the arts or bilingual sectors hard to achieve. In rural areas, declining industries and tourism pressures further threatened cultural heritage and the daily use of the Welsh language.

## **Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities**

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1. **Long-term:** Participants called for stable investment in housing, transport, and sustainable industries, stressing that short-term schemes fail to build security or resilience. They wanted policies that plan for the next generation, not just the next budget cycle. (Echoes Cymru Can’s emphasis on long-term planning and the 2025 Report’s call for sustained, durable infrastructure.)
2. **Prevention:** People highlighted the value of preventative action, for example, ensuring affordable housing and reliable transport before crises of homelessness, unemployment, or isolation develop. They stressed that early investment avoids far greater social and economic costs later. (Aligns with Cymru Can’s mission on prevention funding in housing, jobs, and local infrastructure.)
3. **Integration:** Apprenticeships and local jobs were described as “supercharged actions” that delivered across multiple goals, building skills, reducing poverty, boosting pride, and strengthening communities. Participants stressed the need for policies that deliver these multiple wins. (Reflects Cymru Can’s mission on joined-up action across skills, economy, and community resilience.)
4. **Collaboration:** Where schools, colleges, employers, and councils worked together, people saw expanded opportunities and stronger pathways into work. But too often, responsibility fell on individuals alone, undermining trust. Participants wanted statutory bodies to share accountability. (Links to Cymru Can’s call for collaboration between education, employers, and government to build resilient futures.)
5. **Involvement:** Exclusion was stark for disabled people, rural participants, and low-income families. Barriers in recruitment, training, and

transport left many unable to access opportunities. Participants argued that fair access and genuine inclusion are essential if the system is to work for everyone. (Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and equality in planning, access, and participation.)

## Impact and Implementation

The theme of impact and implementation sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

### Impact and Implementation

**110.** Awareness of the Act was generally low. Most participants were not aware of or had a limited understanding of its function and content. Many participants, who learned about it through the focus groups, recognised its potential importance, but were surprised it was not better known. While participants valued the Act's ambitions once explained, their contributions were shaped more by whether they felt listened to, included, and supported in decision-making.

#### What is working well

**111.** Participants highlighted some positive examples where the spirit of the Act was being realised. Swansea Council's work with older people was praised for valuing lived experience: *"It feels like we're part of the team. We bring the benefit of our years of experience in industry."* Where authorities showed genuine open-mindedness and a willingness to act on what had been discussed, participants felt more willing to collaborate, even while recognising financial pressures:

*"When you've got that open-mindedness to listen, and actually put into place what's been discussed, it works. Councils see all the criticism on social media and think that's the only voice out there, but the majority of people understand that local authorities are under tight budgets, and they want to work with them to move services forward."*

**112.** Participants felt that meaningful co-production built trust, empowerment, and practical results by bringing communities and institutions together as equals, demonstrating that innovation and collaboration could still thrive even within tight financial limits. Co-production, when done well, was described as transformative:

*“The Pathway to Advocacy for Torfaen Council, covering the five authorities in South Wales East, was a real success in co-production. It accommodated everyone, it was one of the best things I’ve ever been involved with. It gave people the confidence to pursue medical issues with the hospital. It took five years to set up, but in the end, it was seen as the most volunteer-led co-production project at the time. It was led by volunteers with expert guidance, there wasn’t a ‘them and us’, just a single team. Having it led by volunteers is really important.”*

#### **What isn’t working well**

**113.** While places like Swansea, Anglesey, and the Vale were described as “shining examples,” elsewhere co-production was described as superficial or inconsistent:

*“Co-production isn’t a tick-box exercise like filling in a survey. You’ve got to get out from behind your desk and speak to people.”*

**114.** The dominant picture was frustration at not being listened to, with a belief that the Act’s ambition for genuine involvement often failed in practice. Participants described campaigns against housing developments, concerns about sewage and rivers being ignored, and consultations that felt inaccessible or tokenistic:

*“The community tells the council what they want, and the council ignores them. They only listen when it’s about something minor, like picking benches for a park, never anything important. Our views on contentious issues make little difference.”*

**115.** Participants also felt that financial structures worked against the Act’s long-term vision. Rigid rules and short-term budgeting cycles were said to encourage wasteful spending at the end of the financial year, rather than strategic

investment. Many argued that giving authorities longer to spend money, or allowing them to save for larger projects, would lead to better outcomes. Others linked fragility to systemic risk, warning of collapse:

*“Every school, health board is in the red... before long, this is all going to fall like dominoes.”*

## Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

### Links to the Well-being Goals

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1. **A More Equal Wales:** Undermined where consultations were inaccessible, poorly promoted, or tokenistic, and where disabled participants, carers, and those with limited time or resources felt excluded.
2. **A Cohesive Wales:** Strengthened in positive examples of co-production, but weakened where communities felt ignored, excluded, or divided by inconsistent practice.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** Threatened by short-term budgeting rules and fragmented decision-making, which undermined local economies and service delivery.
4. **A Resilient Wales:** Supported where co-production and long-term planning built adaptability, but weakened by financial fragility, siloed systems, and year-end spending pressures.
5. **A Healthier Wales:** Indirectly affected, as poor governance and underfunded services reduced trust in institutions seen as vital to wellbeing.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Challenged by concerns about transparency and accountability, raising questions over whether commitments can be delivered credibly.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Linked to calls for meaningful participation and identity, showing the importance of local voice in shaping cultural priorities.

### Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities

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1. **Long-term:** Participants called for budgeting rules to be reformed so councils can plan beyond the year-end cycle, save for larger projects, and invest sustainably.
2. **Prevention:** Participants wanted early action on financial planning and community voice to avoid problems escalating, echoing Cymru Can's call for no more short-term fixes.
3. **Integration and multiple benefits:** Trust, inclusion, and co-production were seen to strengthen services and resilience, clear *supercharged* actions delivering across multiple goals.
4. **Collaboration and empowerment:** Where genuine partnership was tried, participants felt ownership and confidence. But without cultural and structural change, collaboration risks remained superficial.
5. **Involvement and fairness:** The weakest area. Many felt unheard or tokenised, particularly disabled groups and rural or deprived communities, directly linking to Cymru Can's call to rebuild trust in decision-making and ensure fair access.

## Annex 1: Interview Methodology

Questions were written in plain language so participants could contribute without prior knowledge of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Each was internally tagged (for facilitators only) to one or more Well-being Goals, the five Ways of Working, and Cymru Can missions. This ensured that insights could be mapped directly back to the statutory framework while conversations remained accessible and participant-led.

### Framework design summary

Theme	Focus	Tagged to...
Implementation & Impact	Everyday changes in communities and how decisions are made	All Goals; Long-term, Prevention, Involvement; Cymru Can mission on trust
Climate & Nature	Local environmental change, energy use, and resilience	Resilient, Healthier, Prosperous, Globally Responsible; Long-term, Prevention, Integration
Health & Well-being	Everyday barriers and supports to staying well	Healthier, More Equal; Prevention, Collaboration
Culture & Welsh Language	Access, participation, and sustainability of culture and language	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language; Involvement, Collaboration
Economy	Security, fairness, and local prosperity	Prosperous, Globally Responsible; Long-term, Collaboration, Integration
Wrap-up	Participants' single priority for the future	All Goals and Ways; Cymru Can mission on trust

### Evidence map

Framework lens	Where these questions deliver new insight	Key report or strategy hook
<b>7 Goals</b> – Prosperous, Resilient, Healthier, More Equal, Cohesive Communities, Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language, Globally Responsible	Personal stories expose which goals feel tangible and which are invisible.	2025 Report highlights unequal progress and nature/climate emergency

5 Ways of Working – Long-term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement	Tests whether the “how” of decision-making is experienced on the ground.	Report criticises short-term budgets & lack of involvement
Cymru Can Missions – Implementation & Impact; Climate & Nature; Health & Well-being; Culture & Welsh Language; Well-being Economy	Aligns with the Commissioner’s 2030 theory of change while focusing on lived outcomes.	Cymru Can seeks faster, deeper change

### Why these questions add value

- **Fresh angles** not covered by the Commissioner’s engagement: the 2025 Report focuses on system-level recommendations (e.g. food resilience plan, prevention budgets, culture bill, rebuilding trust). This framework captured whether those broad asks feel visible and relevant in people’s daily lives.
- **Targeted to the five Cymru Can missions** – Implementation & Impact; Climate & Nature; Health & Well-being; Culture & Welsh Language; Well-being Economy – giving the Committee a mission-by-mission evidence base.
- **Connected to the legal spine of the Act** – Every question was designed to test whether the long-term, preventative, integrated, collaborative and involvement principles were experienced by ordinary people.

### Creative methods

To make the framework more accessible and spark imagination, we used creative methods alongside the core questions. These broadened participation and encouraged people to reflect on Wales’s future in a more personal way:

**Flags for the Future** – young participants wrote or drew their hopes for the next 10, 20 or 50 years of life in Wales, expressing ambitions in their own words and images.

**Postcards from the Future** – visitors to the Senedd chose a postcard linked to one of the seven Well-being Goals and described Wales in 2030 and beyond, and how it got there. Postcards were pegged to a public display, making contributions visible and collective.

These creative methods complemented the question framework by capturing visions of the future in simple, accessible ways that deepened engagement.

## Annex 2: Partner Organisations and Participant groups

1. Age Cymru
2. All Wales People First
3. Arts Factory Ltd
4. Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales
5. Building Communities Trust-Neath Port Talbot CVS
6. Carmarthenshire People First
7. Careers Wales NEET advisers
8. CWVYS-Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
9. Cymru Older People's Alliance
10. Dewis Centre for Independent Living
11. Disability Arts Cymru
12. Disability Sports Wales
13. Disability Wales
14. Fairbourne Moving Forward
15. Llamau: Education/Employment programme for at-risk youth
16. MENCAP – Ynys Mon
17. Merched y Wawr Capel Garmon, Llanrwst
18. Pembrokeshire People First
19. Porthcawl Environment Partnership
20. Pwyllgor Cymraeg Aberconwy
21. The Wallich Shadow Board

22. Working Wales NEET advisers
23. Youth Cymru outreach hubs

### Schools

1. Cardiff West Community High School, Cardiff.
2. Cathedral Independent School, Cardiff.
3. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymney, Blackwood.
4. Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea
5. Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, Ynys Mon.
6. Ysgol Uwchradd y Creuddyn, Conwy.

## Annex 3: Participants' Demographic

### Overview of Participant Demographics and Geography

A total of **324** people engaged with the engagement programme:

- 21 engagement sessions with **151** total participants
- **173** Postcards from the Future were completed by visitors to the Senedd.

### By Priority Audience:

- **Young people** formed the largest group with **64 participants (42%)**, spanning coastal rural (14), urban (27), and valleys (23) settings.
- **Disabled people** contributed **36 participants (24%)**, spread across rural, rural coastal, and all-Wales groups.
- **People experiencing vulnerability or inequality** (previously categorised as “homeless”) added **30 participants (20%)**, with voices from rural, valleys, and urban contexts.
- **Older people** contributed **18 participants (12%)**, across coastal, rural coastal, and all-Wales groups.
- **Youth (general, not school-based)** made up **3 participants (2%)**, via an all-Wales organisation.

### By Regional Setting

- **Urban/valleys only** groups engaged **48 participants (32%)**, mainly in Cardiff West, Rhondda, Islwyn, and Swansea East.
- **Rural/coastal only** groups accounted for **62 participants (41%)**, with strong contributions from Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Aberconwy, and Ynys Môn.
- **All-Wales and mixed-setting groups** provided **41 participants (27%)**, reflecting organisations that cut across geographies.

### By Constituency / Geography

- The highest concentrations of participants came from:
  - Cardiff West: 35 participants (23%)
  - Pembrokeshire: 15 participants (10%)
  - Rhondda: 13 participants (9%)
  - Islwyn: 14 participants (9%)
  - Aberconwy: 19 participants (13%)
  - Ynys Môn: 6 participants (4%)
  - Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire: 12 participants (8%)
  - Swansea East: 8 participants (5%)
  - South Wales (general): 10 participants (7%)
- **All-Wales organisations** added **19 participants (13%)**, offering perspectives that cut across local boundaries.

This breakdown shows a **balanced mix of rural, coastal, urban, and valleys voices**, with notable crossover between categories. While young people were the largest single audience, **over half of all participants (53%)** came from groups often excluded from decision-making (disabled people, older people, and those facing vulnerability or inequality). The **geographic distribution** demonstrates that the engagement reached into both **densely populated centres** and **rural/coastal areas**, while the **27% from all-Wales or mixed setting**.



# Agenda Item 7

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

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