

Jayne Bryant AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government



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/62/25

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair  
Equality & Social Justice Committee

14 February 2025

Dear Jenny,

At the meeting of the Equality & Social Justice Committee on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, we agreed to provide further information to aid the Committee into Fuel Poverty in Wales and the Warm Homes Programme.

1. The proportion of energy types installed under the Nest scheme

The Nest Annual Reports<sup>1</sup> provide a breakdown of the Home Energy Improvement Packages installed under the Nest scheme for each reporting year. These Annual Reports refer to the previous iteration of Nest.

Measures installed under the new scheme, launched 1 April 2024 will be included in the 2024/25 Nest Annual Report which will be published later this year.

2. Confirmation from TrustMark as to the number of installations under the ECO Flex scheme that have been made in Wales, including the breakdown of how much money has been spent in Wales on this scheme

My officials have previously requested figures on ECO Flex certifications with TrustMark. TrustMark, however, has responded that they do not collate spend figures on ECO Flex and do not record ECO Flex data separately to the Energy Company Obligation, ECO scheme.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Warm Homes Nest scheme: annual reports | GOV.WALES](#)

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Jayne.Bryant@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jayne.Bryant@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@gov.Wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jayne.Bryant@gov.Wales)

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

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

Ofgem have confirmed there are currently 11,657 ECO Flex submissions made by Welsh Local Authorities.

### 3. Government efforts to address skills shortages and accelerate participation in the Nest programme

Welsh Government has a multi-pronged approach to addressing the skills gap necessary to support the delivery of the Nest programme and similar other retrofit scheme in Wales.

#### **Partnerships with Further Education Institutions and Training Providers**

We are working with further education institutions and training providers to develop courses for the skills required for retrofit/net zero work. We provide training grants for both employers and individuals to upskill individuals.

We are working with Colleges Wales<sup>2</sup> and the 12 Further Education Colleges across Wales, alongside MEDR<sup>3</sup>, to develop courses for the Built Environment. These courses focus on the same skills used in homes; manufacturing, installation, maintenance, the circular economy, and the four utilities, (water, gas, electricity, sewerage). Information on current training courses under the Optimised Retrofit Programme, is available [here](#).

#### **Funding Support for Training**

The Flexible Skills Programme (FSP)<sup>4</sup> is a training grant, available to all employers in Wales<sup>5</sup> that wish to purchase training courses from third party training providers to help them meet their business's upskilling objectives, including retrofitting skills.

This programme is designed to provide funding support to Wales-based businesses to help them address Net Zero challenges. The Welsh Government funds up to 50% of the training costs. Applications are invited from businesses in any sector and from any part of Wales.

The Net Zero Skills: Business Wales Skills Gateway<sup>6</sup> forms part of the offering of support. The gateway is scheduled for rebranding and officials are working with Skills colleagues, Business Wales and Sell to Wales on rebranding the gateway to ensure and this and how it will support retrofit and the built environment.

In addition to providing training for employers, we are also funding training for individuals. The Personal Learning Accounts<sup>7</sup> (PLAs) support a much wider range of courses and has a salary cap of £32,371 a year. Personal Learning Accounts provides support for careers that support but are not directly linked to the current net Zero Green Personal Learning Accounts

The Green Personal Learning Accounts<sup>8</sup> provide funding for specific net zero skills courses, without a salary cap, to expand an individual's access to essential training. The approved list of courses can be found [here](#).

---

<sup>2</sup> [ColegauCymru](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Medr - the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Flexible Skills Programme | Business Wales Skills Gateway](#)

<sup>5</sup> including third sector and community interest companies but excludes public sector including academia

<sup>6</sup> [Net Zero Skills | Business Wales Skills Gateway](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Rewrite your career with a Personal Learning Account | Working Wales](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Stronger, fairer greener Wales: net zero skills | GOV.WALES](#)

We have also introduced a construction degree which includes retrofitting skills and in 2023/24, 2,160 construction apprenticeships were started.

### **Succession Planning in Schools**

We believe longer term succession planning and the development of career awareness in Primary & Secondary Schools is critical. Officials are working on raising awareness with Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus.

Officials are also engaging with the supply chain and will shortly launch the Optimised RetroFit Programme on Sell2Wales that will be open to everyone.

### **Engaging with the supply chain**

Welsh Government's objective is to drive Wales's accredited supply chain and workforce. We are working across government departments to achieve this. We are working with colleagues in the Economy department, Business Wales/Sell to Wales, and are planning a North and South Wales Expo for suppliers, training organisations, buyers and the 34 Scheme Providers who come under the remit of TrustMark.

### **Engaging with other Governmental departments**

Officials have an ongoing engagement with the Department for Work and Pensions, (DWP) officials. The DWP has a range of support available to employers to assist with their recruitment and retention. The DWP employer offer is available at no cost to the employer and will be tailored to the employer's needs. DWP are keen to work with Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords and their supply chains to ensure that customers living in local communities have the right skills and experience to access the roles required to deliver the retrofit of social housing stock.

4. Consideration of reintroducing a role similar to Home Energy Conservation Act, 1995 (HECA) officers to ensure consistency across local authorities in tackling fuel poverty.

The decision to remove the requirement for local authority HECA officers in Wales and replace it with a new national energy efficiency and savings plan took place during the second Senedd term. It was driven by several factors<sup>9</sup>:

- **Evolving Energy Policies:** The Welsh Government aimed to align with more contemporary energy efficiency strategies and targets, which were not fully addressed by the HECA framework
- **Data and Measurement Issues:** There were challenges in reliably measuring the progress and impact of HECA initiatives, which made it difficult to assess their effectiveness
- **Broader Environmental Goals:** The new plan aimed to integrate energy efficiency efforts with broader environmental and sustainability goals.

The Welsh Government has, over the long term, stressed the link between energy efficiency and improved outcomes for people's lives. The Arbed scheme, launched in 2010, targeted residential retrofit in the most deprived areas in Wales, delivered in a way that encouraged and equipped Welsh SMES to work together to deliver the work to a high standard and creating skilled local jobs. The current Warm Homes scheme has evolved from that initial programme and represents enduring work to improve energy inefficient homes in Wales.

---

<sup>9</sup> [Microsoft Word - Committee report on HECA.doc](#)

The Welsh Government worked with each of the regional Growth Deals to develop regional energy plans that identified the economic benefit that can come from transitioning to a clean energy future. These have been augmented by a programme to develop Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). These plans can be used to drive delivery across Wales in a consistent way. The Welsh Government funds a team of officers in each region whose role is to coordinate activity on energy delivery.

The needs of different areas in Wales for LAEPs vary significantly. In Cardiff, for example, there are many new buildings heated by electricity but fewer heat pumps and limited space for renewable energy sources, necessitating power imports. In contrast, Ynys Mon has ample land for renewable energy but older buildings needing retrofits. Pembrokeshire, with its land and coastline, supports renewable energy but also has strong local support for a hydrogen economy due to its oil and gas industry employment<sup>10</sup>.

The Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) provides support to local authorities. This includes technical, commercial, and procurement advice to help turn energy projects into reality. WGES also facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences among local authorities,

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) also provides support to local authorities in delivering their LAEPs. This support is part of its broader mission to assist local governments in Wales with various initiatives, including climate change and energy planning.

The Welsh Government and the WLGA encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practices among local authorities. In addition to support from WGES, other examples of collaboration are:

- **Workshops and Stakeholder Meetings:** Local authorities, energy networks, developers, housing associations, and community groups participate in workshops and meetings to share insights and best practices. This collaborative approach helps ensure that plans are robust and practical
- **Regional Collaborations:** Work through initiatives such as Corporate Joint Committees or Growth Deals, like Ambition North Wales and Cardiff Capital Region, involve multiple local authorities working together to develop and implement LAEPs. These collaborations allow for the sharing of data, strategies, and solutions tailored to the unique needs of each area.
- **Public and Private Networks:** Integration through public and private networks helps plan changes to national infrastructure over time, ensuring that local plans are aligned and can benefit from shared resources and innovations.

---

<sup>10</sup> [Welsh Local Area Energy Planning - Arup](#)

These collaborative efforts help local authorities learn from each other and implement effective strategies for achieving net-zero carbon emissions. Our view is that the existing plan-driven and collaborative working we are supporting is achieving better outcomes than could have been expected from retaining HECA officers. Indeed, our innovative and Wales-wide energy planning work is held up as an exemplar to English regions by independent organisations.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Jayne Bryant AS/MS**

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

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

**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