

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

April 17th 2025

Dear Carolyn

Petition P-06-1488 Establish a 'Care Society' to Tackle the Long COVID Crisis in Wales

Thank you for your letter dated 4 March which we noted at our meeting on 24 March. We recognise the importance of this issue and wanted to highlight the findings of our recent report on the Disability Employment Gap which may be of interest to the petitioners. In 'Anything's achievable with the right support' we concluded that those who want, and are able to work, should have that dignity of work. Our recommendations and conclusions emphasised the need to review how guidance is promoted among employers; ensure reasonable adjustments for employees are more consistently and proactively offered; and the need to challenge attitudes and assumptions about the difficulty or cost associated with employing people with a range of conditions and impairments. Published at the beginning of March, we are currently awaiting a Welsh Government response and expect to debate the report in Plenary during summer 2025.

More broadly, however, I am afraid that we have no current plans to look at the impact of Long COVID and are unlikely to have the capacity to do so in the time that remains available to us. Our forward work programme is heavily committed and we expect our ability to undertake additional work will further diminish if legislation is referred to us for scrutiny in the final year of the Senedd term.

Nevertheless this matter deserves proper scrutiny and we hope that another committee perhaps with more expertise or capacity can accommodate your request in some way. In so doing we think it would be important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns on early years and child development including their speech and language skills. This was an important theme in our work on speech, language and communication needs in the youth justice system and despite Welsh Government recalcitrance we continue to advocate for better provision in this area.

Thank you to you and to the petitioners for highlighting this important issue. We hope that you are not too disappointed by our response and find our previous work useful.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

