



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1488
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/00727/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

petitions@senedd.wales

01 May 2025

Dear Carolyn,

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

Thank you for your letter of 7 March to the First Minister regarding the above petition. I will take each substantive point in turn.

1. A Guaranteed Basic Income for People with Chronic Illness

Our Basic Income for Care Leavers in Wales pilot is intended to help understand the unique challenges care leavers face and determine whether extending the time they are supported could have a positive impact on their lives as they transition to adulthood. The pilot will conclude later this year and will be subject to a comprehensive evaluation, which is due to run until early 2027. The pilot is not intended to respond to the efficacy of all possible uses for basic income.

Any future consideration of the use of a basic income in Wales will need to be informed by the learning from the care leavers pilot, including through the evaluation. I also refer you to the Social Justice Secretary's comments about the support we provide to people in this Senedd [debate](#).

2. Expansion of Community-Based Work and Care Cooperatives

Social enterprises and community-led co-operatives are an important part of the social and economic landscape in Wales. It is recognised that community-based organisations provide good quality job opportunities, support local economies and in many cases safeguarding community assets and vital services.

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

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

There are currently just over 500 co-operatives and mutuals in Wales. The Welsh Government provides funding support to Cwmpas and it has been promoting the co-operative economy for more than 40 years in Wales. It works with partners to provide advice and support to those establishing co-operative and mutuals in Wales, in addition to working to ensure the right conditions in Wales to enable the sector to grow and flourish.

Social prescribing initiatives across Wales have been developed to meet local need. Our [National Framework for Social Prescribing](#) aims to develop a shared understanding of the language used and the approach taken to social prescribing in Wales; support social prescribing practitioners and drive-up skills; set out the outcomes expected from a user, organisation, commissioner, and referrer perspective; and ensure a quality of provision by community assets. It includes several cross-cutting themes essential for the successful implementation of social prescribing which includes ensuring social prescribing is accessible to all.

The Welsh Government's Plan for Employability and Skills includes the priority of supporting people with a long term health condition to work. Our Communities for Work+ programme which provides specialist employment advisory support and intensive mentoring for people, has also made strong progress in supporting participants who identify as disabled or having long term health conditions. This accounts for more than 20% of those supported.

Furthermore, the Welsh Government's In-Work Support Service provides rapid access to tailored occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychological therapy services. The services are designed to help employed or self-employed people return to work or manage a health condition in work.

3. A Publicly-Owned Clean Air Strategy

Our national air quality strategy, also known as the *Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales*, describes how the Welsh Government is addressing air pollution challenges by working collaboratively across Government departments, different sectors and with the public. The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 created a requirement for a Welsh clean air plan or strategy to be reviewed and published at least every five years.

The Act sets out an air quality target-setting framework that gives Welsh Ministers powers to make regulations setting long term targets in respect of any matter relating to air quality in Wales. There is a duty on Welsh Ministers to make regulations setting a target for PM_{2.5} within three years of Royal Assent. There is a further duty for Welsh Ministers to make regulations within six years of Royal Assent to set a long-term target for one of the following pollutants: ammonia; particulate matter (PM₁₀); ground level ozone; nitrogen dioxide; carbon monoxide; and sulphur dioxide. New national air quality targets will provide a strong mechanism to deliver positive long-term ambitions for clean air and associated public health and environmental outcomes, building upon progress towards the objectives of the Clean Air Plan for Wales.

The Act includes a duty on Welsh Ministers to promote awareness of air pollution. We are working with an expert group to develop a delivery plan setting out how we will promote awareness of, and work to mitigate, the risks to human health and the natural environment associated with air pollution. This is likely to include actions related to raising awareness of local air quality, as well as actions aimed at reducing pollution from vehicle idling and domestic burning. Enabling the public to make informed choices about the impacts of poor air quality and required mitigations is essential to informing and changing public attitudes

and behaviours. These actions are important in delivering the ambitious changes needed to improve air quality and support wider government ambitions, such as for decarbonisation. As part of our action to promote awareness of air pollution, we have continued to support Clean Air Day and Clean Air Night – the UK’s biggest air pollution campaign.

We have also continued to make funding available to local authorities through the Local Air Quality Management Support Fund. In 2024-25, we allocated around £600k allocated to five local authorities to deliver projects aimed at improving local air quality.

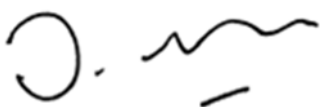
With regards to the Optimised Retrofit Programme, should new evidence arise where there is a need to revise these standards we would consider the available evidence and advice from industry experts.

Separately, new social homes are built to high energy efficiency standards which requires adequate ventilation.

Finally, in relation to public awareness campaigns on airborne disease prevention, last winter Public Health Wales ran a Beat Winter Viruses communications campaign to encourage preventative behaviours for respiratory viruses, based on behaviours and audience insight. The campaign targeted a broad range of the population, focusing on increasing knowledge and motivation for the public to adopt preventative behaviours over winter when there is an increased risk of spread. Widespread public awareness can play a role in reducing gaps in knowledge and information. A campaign approach is most effective when taking a risk-based approach, focused on areas with a higher level of risk, combined with being specific in terms of audience, timing and saliency of messaging to help elicit protective behaviours.

We will continue to support people to access their entitlements, to maximise their incomes and to access sustainable employment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

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