

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 3 December
2019

Meeting time: 09.15 – 10.25

This meeting can be viewed
on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/5680>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Janet Finch-Saunders AM (Chair) Michelle Brown AM Jack Sargeant AM Dai Lloyd AM
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Ross Davies (Deputy Clerk) Samiwel Davies (Legal Adviser)

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Apologies were received from Neil McEvoy and Leanne Wood. Dai Lloyd attended in place of Leanne Wood.



2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-918 Improve disabled access to Treforest train station as a priority

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Minister for Economy and Transport to welcome the confirmation that improvements are planned to access at Treforest station, and ask when he expects these to be completed and the options open to disabled passengers in the interim.

2.2 P-05-919 Do not implement licensing for show dogs, cats and shown horses

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await confirmation of the Welsh Government's decisions over the final licensing scheme following the recent consultation.

2.3 P-05-920 School Budgeting for ALN

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- await further views from the petitioner to the response provided by the Minister for Education; and
- write to the Welsh Local Government Association to ask for information about the approach taken by local authorities when allocating funding for additional learning needs.

2.4 P-05-923 Are you listening to us? Home Education Rights and Respect!

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- group the petition with [P-05-922 Withdraw the proposed home education guidance](#) and to consider theme together in the future; and
- write back to the Minister for Education to ask for details of the response rate to the consultation, and for an indication of the proposed timescales for determining the next steps.

Janet Finch-Saunders declared an interest as a member of the Children, Young People and Education Committee which has look at this issue.

2.5 P-05-922 Withdraw the proposed home education guidance

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- group the petition with [P-05-923 Are you listening to us? Home Education Rights and Respect!](#) and to consider them together in the future; and
- write back to the Minister for Education to ask for details of the response rate to the consultation, confirmation that the legal opinion provided by the petitioners is being considered by the Welsh Government and for an indication of the proposed timescales for determining the next steps.

Janet Finch-Saunders declared an interest as a member of the Children, Young People and Education Committee which has look at this issue.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

The Committee considered further information and agreed to write to the Minister for Education to ask for an update in relation to the publication of high level information about asbestos management in schools, as referred to in her previous correspondence.

3.2 P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

The Committee considered this petition alongside petition [P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias](#) and agreed to write to the Minister for Education to:

- request an update on the review of school attendance policy and an indication of timings for the next steps, including a public consultation; and
- seek the Governments latest view in relation to the discretion of Headteachers to authorise absences for holidays in term time, when appropriate

3.3 P-04-606 Ensure schools exercise their statutory powers under regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 without interference or bias.

The Committee considered this petition alongside petition [P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time](#) and agreed to write to the Minister for Education to:

- request an update on the review of school attendance policy and an indication of timings for the next steps, including a public consultation; and
- seek the Government's latest view in relation to the discretion of headteachers to authorise absences for holidays in term time, when appropriate.

3.4 P-05-807 Review and change the guidance for attendance awards in Welsh schools

The Committee considered further information and agreed to write to the Minister for Education to request an update on the review of school attendance policy and an indication of timings for the next steps, including a public consultation.

3.5 P-05-754 Lack of support for children with disabilities at crisis

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to contact Cwm Tâf Morgannwg University Health Board to ask for them to take forward a meeting with the petitioner over the support services provided to families with children with disabilities, as previously agreed, and ask them to provide an update once this has taken place.

3.6 P-05-846 Save our Hospital at Prince Philip Llanelli

Dai Lloyd declared an interest as his daughter-in-law is a doctor at Prince Phillip Hospital.

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to hold the petition and consider any developments in another 6 months' time, as requested by the petitioners, and seek an update from Hywel Dda University Health Board to inform that discussion.

3.7 P-05-849 All men in Wales should have access through the NHS to the best possible diagnostic tests for prostate cancer

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask what arrangements he would expect to be in place for patients who need investigation in health boards yet to implement pre-biopsy mpMRI scans as recommended by the revised NICE guidelines.

3.8 P-05-854 Make Learning Disability training mandatory for hospital staff

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to close the petition in light of the commitments made by the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services during the Plenary debate held on 6 November, and to congratulate the petitioners for their work towards achieve that commitment.

3.9 P-05-905 Call for an Independent judicial Inquiry into the reorganisation of services within Cwm Taf Health Board

The Committee agreed to write back to the Minister for Health and Social services to ask for a direct response to the petition's call for an independent inquiry into the reorganisation of services within Cwm Taf Health Board, and Royal Glamorgan Hospital in particular.

3.10 P-05-723 Establish Proportional Representation Voting System for Welsh Local Council Elections.

In light of the proposal within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill to give local authorities a choice over the electoral system used for local elections, and the scrutiny which will be applied to this by the Assembly, the Committee agreed to close the petition.

3.11 P-05-800 Urgent Appeal for a Welsh Veterans Commissioner for the Health & Wellbeing of Wounded, Injured, Sick and Homeless veterans

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis that it has now been some time since the Committee received correspondence from the petitioner and it is therefore difficult to see how the petition could be progressed further.

3.12 P-05-843 More Third party rights in planning appeals

Dai Lloyd declared an interested as he has previously directly engaged with the petitioner.

Given that the proposal for third party appeal rights has been rejected by the Welsh Government – as it was during previous consideration given to this issue during scrutiny of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 – it is difficult to identify how the Committee can take the petition any further. The Committee therefore agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner for her contributions to the process.

3.13 P-05-845 End Conflict of Interest in Local Authority Constitution

Dai Lloyd declared an interested as he has previously directly engaged with the petitioner.

In the absence of evidence of conflict of interest, and the information about existing safeguards provided by the Welsh Government and the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Committee agreed to close the petition.

3.14 P-05-901 Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and, given the current uncertainties surrounding the UK's future relationship with the European Union, and the resulting constraints on the Welsh Government's powers to act at this time, agreed to keep a watching brief on the issue and seek a further update in six months' time, or sooner if the situation changes.

3.15 P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write to the Minister for Housing and Local Government to ask what guidance is provided to community and town councils in relation to the ability of the public or journalists to record meetings.

3.16 P-05-775 Put an end to the Cross Border and Sub-contracting Taxi Licensing loophole.

The Committee considered this petition alongside [P-05-835 Allow Free Movement of Taxi Drivers to Carry Out Private Hire Work Anywhere in Wales](#) and agreed to write to the Minister for Economy and Transport to ask him to provide an update on the Welsh Government's future plans in relation to reform of taxi licensing and, in particular, the plan for short-term measures which could be taken forward in advance of legislation.

3.17 P-05-835 Allow Free Movement of Taxi Drivers to Carry Out Private Hire Work Anywhere in Wales

The Committee considered this petition alongside [P-05-775 Put an end to the Cross Border and Sub-contracting Taxi Licensing loophole](#) and agreed to write to the Minister for Economy and Transport to ask him to provide an update on the Welsh Government's future plans in relation to reform of taxi licensing and, in particular, the plan for short-term measures which could be taken forward in advance of legislation.

3.18 P-05-836 Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis that it has now been some time since the Committee received correspondence from the petitioner and it is therefore difficult to see how the petition could be progressed further, and in light of the actions previously outlined by the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip'.

3.19 P-05-873 Free Welsh Lessons for the People of Wales

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write back to the Minister for the Welsh Language to share the petitioner's latest comments and seek a response to the specific circumstances highlighted.

3.20 P-05-883 National Welsh History Week

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism to raise the further points made by the

petitioner and ask how the Welsh Government could seek to provide a wider narrative to the range of initiatives taking place in relation to the history of Wales.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

The motion was agreed.

5 Petitions Committee Newsletter

The Committee agreed to trial the publication of a termly Committee newsletter.