

To: Jane Hutt

Minister for
Social Justice

Via email only

31 July 2023

Dear Jane,

I write in support of the recommendations made by the Senedd Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in their recent inquiry report entitled *Review of the Welsh Commissioners*.

Several of these recommendations speak to issues we have raised with you and Welsh Government colleagues previously and some were raised in our submission to the aforementioned Review. These include:

- The restrictions placed on our use of reserves due to our inclusion within the accounting boundary; and associated risks to our independence. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government reviews the impact of the changes after they have been in operation for two years and provides an update to the Committee by September 2024;
- The timeliness of confirming funding allocations for Commissioners;
- The need for a post-legislative review of the legislation governing all Commissioners including a review of the funding allocated to them. Our own review of Welsh Government in 2021 noted that:

"The powers of the current legislation will require review and revision ... A further flaw in the legislation can also be corrected by a comprehensive review. The Government, as the body



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that appoints and funds the Commissioner's office, is able to effectively block and delay the legitimate attempts of the Commissioner to examine their conduct and this cannot be right or acceptable in a democratic society. Further, this arrangement does not conform to the international standard of the Paris Principles and it is therefore extremely disappointing that, during the course of this Review, the Government rejected the calls of the Senedd Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee in their Children's Rights in Wales report to transfer the appointment and accountability of the office to the Senedd."

- Whether new legislation may impact upon the remit of Welsh Commissioners, ensuring there are adequate resources to incorporate extensions to their roles and responsibilities.

These are long-standing concerns and, as such, I hope that the Welsh Government will give full consideration and respond positively to the Committee's recommendations.

I would be happy to further discuss these issues with you

Yours sincerely,



Rocio

Rocio Cifuentes MBE

Comisiynydd Plant Cymru
Children's Commissioner for Wales



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cc. Mark Isherwood MS, Chair, Public Accounts and
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Jo Stevens, Head of Children's Branch, Welsh
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