



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Cabinet Sub-Committee on Justice meeting: 25 October 2023

Minutes of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Justice meeting on
25 October 2023.

First published: 12 December 2023

Last updated: 12 December 2023

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-justice-meeting-25-october-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

Present

Prisoner education

Disaggregation of data

Small homes

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-justice-meeting-25-october-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Present (via Teams)

- Rt. Hon Mark Drakeford MS
- Mick Antoniw MS (Chair)
- Jane Hutt MS (part meeting)
- Julie Morgan MS (part meeting)
- Jeremy Miles MS (part meeting)

Welsh Government officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Piers Bisson, Director, European Transition, Constitution and Justice
- James Gerard, Deputy Director Justice Policy
- Karin Phillips, Deputy Director, Community Safety
- Alistair Davey, Deputy Director, Social Services Enabling
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Ian Butler, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- David Hooson, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Catrin Sully, Head of Cabinet Office
- Rory Powell, Head of First Minister's Private Office
- Kathryn Hallett, Senior Private Secretary, First Minister
- Bethan Phillips, Senior Private Secretary, MSJCW
- Lauren Stamp, Senior Private Secretary, MEWL
- Lowri Lloyd-Hughes, Senior Private Secretary, Counsel General
- Katie Jones, Assistant Private Secretary, Counsel General

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-justice-meeting-25-october-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

- Cloe Thomas, Legal Services
- Charmaine Richards, Legislative Programme and Governance Unit
- Andrew O'Rourke, ESJ - Knowledge and Analytical Services
- Nadine Young, ESJ – Social Partnership, Employability and Fair Work
- Merisha Weeks, Justice Policy
- Kevin-John Pidduck, Justice Policy
- VK Sepe, Community Safety
- Tony Jones, Justice Policy
- Andrew Felton, Justice Policy
- James Searle, Community Safety

External attendee

- Dame Vera Baird KC, Independent Expert Adviser on Justice Devolution

Item 1: Prisoner education

1.1 The Minister for Education and Welsh Language introduced the paper, which asked the Sub-Committee to note the progress made in delivering education in prisons in Wales, as a devolved responsibility managed through an MoU with HMPPS.

1.2 It was reported the Welsh Government had made steady progress in response to the Hanson review of Offender Education in Wales, published in 2019, with action having been taken in response to all 22 of the recommendations made by the review.

1.3 The conclusion of this work would be publication of the 'Better Learning, Better Chances' policy, due to be launched later in the year.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-justice-meeting-25-october-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

1.4 In response to one of the Hanson review recommendations to develop an ongoing programme of stakeholder engagement, the government had established the Offender Learning and Employability Stakeholder Group, which met in person twice a year and included representatives from HMPPS, DWP, Further Education, Higher Education, third sector, Estyn, Police and Crime Commissioner, Trade Unions, Regional Skills Partnerships, WLGA and ex-offenders.

1.5 Justice Policy officials had also been invited to attend and more recently, teachers and tutors delivering in the secure estate had been invited to participate.

1.6 In 2021, close work with HMPPS led to an agreement to contract the learning and skills provision at HMP / YOI Parc separately from the main prison operating contract. Government officials played an integral part in the development of the design specifications for the learning and skills provision for the new contract to ensure that it reflected Welsh Government priorities.

1.7 In addition, there had been significant work undertaken to ensure people in prison were able to access the Welsh Government employability support available in the community. For example, ReAct+ funded training supported individuals to obtain the qualifications they needed to gain employment on release.

1.8 Through the Employability Hubs that had been established by HMPPS in each of the prisons, Working Wales continued to support people in prison.

1.9 In addition, through Working Wales, the Young Person's Guarantee was being brought to people under the age of 25 in prisons, to help them access the support they needed to gain a place in education or training and help to get into work or become self-employed.

1.10 The government had also commissioned Working Wales to conduct a pilot

to review the employability support, training and guidance offered to prisoners from custody to community, following individuals through their journey to employment. This would inform understanding of the real-life issues and opportunities individuals faced, to help develop an effective enhanced pathway to employment for offenders and those currently within the probation service.

1.11 Work would continue with HMPPS to improve the employment outcomes of people on probation by raising awareness and access to Welsh Government support such as ReACT+, Personal Learning Accounts and the Young Person's Guarantee.

1.12 The sub-committee then discussed the policy document 'Better Learning, Better Chances', which set out the Government's expectations for the delivery of education, employability and skills support in the adult secure estate in Wales.

1.13 It was reported the policy had been co-developed with delivery partners and stakeholders, including those with lived experiences of learning and skills provision in prisons, enabling a clear understanding of the barriers facing learners and the employability and skills provision needed to support them.

1.14 In addition, some of the lessons learnt through the Covid pandemic had been incorporated, such as the importance of developing a blended approach to learning and the opportunities that a progressive approach to digitalisation of the prison estate could provide.

1.15 It was noted that a Welsh Government commissioned series of focus groups had taken place to consult with learners in the secure estate, veterans and female ex-offenders within the community, to ensure their views were at the heart of the policy. As no female prisons were located in Wales, a focus group was held with learners from Wales in HMP Styal.

1.16 The draft policy had been developed to reflect the Programme for Government commitments and provided a clear outline of policy expectations

and ambitions, as well as an overview of the key roles and responsibilities of all those involved in prison education in Wales.

1.17 The policy covered adults aged 18 and above in the secure estate in Wales, and it was noted that children in custody in Wales were based in Parc YOI and Hillside Secure Children's Home, which covered both custodial sentence and welfare placements.

1.18 It was acknowledged that education had a key role to play in inspiring children in the secure estate that there could be a different way of living. The Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales, published in 2019, set out the ambition for a rights-based and trauma-informed system to support services to deliver positive outcomes for children in Wales. Children who were in custody should be supported to realise their potential, including by receiving an education that met their individual needs and responded to their best interests.

1.19 The sub-committee welcomed the policy.

Item 2: Disaggregation of data

2.1 The Counsel General introduced the item, which focused on how to improve access to disaggregated data on the Welsh justice system, which remained an important goal of the government.

2.2 It was important for people to have access to clear and understandable information about how the justice system worked in their local areas.

2.3 Cardiff University had completed much work in this area, with publications such as the Justice Factfiles, which demonstrated the value of this agenda to Wales. These publications had created a conversation on Welsh justice which would not otherwise be possible.

2.4 A range of progress had taken place which had been achieved despite many of the levers resting with the Ministry of Justice.

2.5 The Counsel General then invited the senior statistical officer for crime and justice in the Knowledge and Analytical Services division to provide a brief demonstration of the Youth Justice Dashboard, which was the first of a series of anticipated dashboards making information on the Welsh justice system more accessible than ever before.

2.6 The sub-committee welcomed the developments and requested links to the resource to study the information available in more detail.

2.7 The sub-committee noted the future work.

Item 3: Small homes

3.1 The Deputy Minister for Social Services asked her officials to introduce the item, which asked the Sub-Committee to note the current position on the youth secure estate and the Welsh Government response, along with agreeing that Small Homes as a long-term project should be paused until youth justice was devolved; and to agree the set of alternative activity to progress practical work in the meantime.

3.2 It was reported that for both the remand and secure estate elements of Small Homes, work was required to better understand the challenges and opportunities before the scope and scale of any future capital investment could be properly defined.

3.3 There was considerable thought needed to define the underlying causes of the challenges in the sector in more detail, to identify the right solutions to these underlying challenges and to define potential future models of delivery. This

work would need to be completed before a determination about future capital investment could be made.

3.4 It was suggested that with the potential devolution of youth justice now a more realistic prospect, a devolve then reform approach could support a more coherent and integrated approach to the future secure youth estate.

3.5 Allied to this, a pathfinder led by the Youth Justice Board in North Wales would substantially deliver many of the initial goals of the Small Homes programme, and a programme of alternative activity to progress practical work in the meantime would take place.

3.6 The Sub-Committee agreed that reframing the Small Homes issue would be the most appropriate way forward, in order to maximise overall impact in the context of limited resources in the short to medium term, whilst laying the groundwork for more ambitious activity post-devolution.

3.7 The reframing of the programme would be communicated to stakeholders in terms of the work being addressed in different ways.

Cabinet Secretariat
November 2023

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-justice-meeting-25-october-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).