

Getting involved with Committees

June 2021



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the Senedd website:

www.senedd.wales

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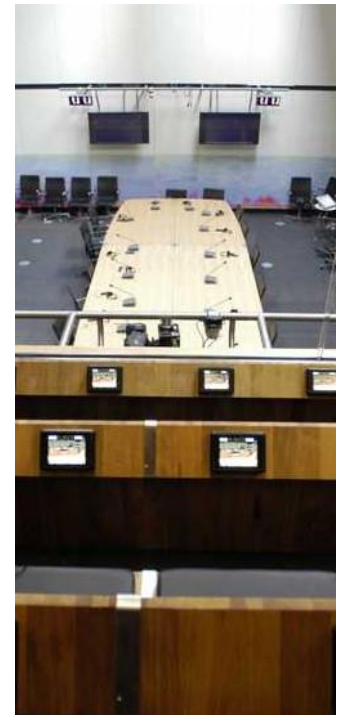
Getting involved with committees

The Senedd works with a wide range of individuals and groups when undertaking its scrutiny of both policy and legislation. This booklet aims to give you the information you need if asked to get involved with the work of committees.

If you have worked with committees before you may simply wish to refresh yourself on our [guidelines for submitting written and digital evidence](#).

For those who have already given evidence to a committee remember that you can follow the work of each committee from the [committees home page](#).

The Senedd is committed to engaging with the people of Wales in its work. If you feel you require any adjustment to the standard process to enable you to fully contribute, please discuss your needs with the relevant clerking team.



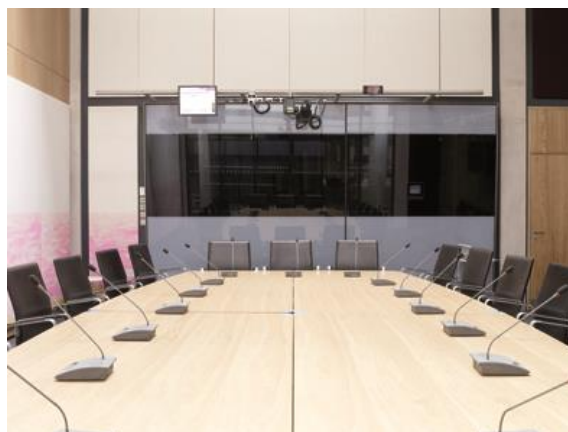
What is a committee?

1. Committees are one of the key mechanisms that enable the Senedd to fulfil its statutory and constitutional functions.

2. At the Senedd, a committee is made up of a number of Senedd Members from different party groups who are appointed, by the Senedd in Plenary, to work together to undertake detailed work and carry out specific functions. The Senedd also decides who will be the chair of each committee. Members of a Senedd committee, or sub-committee, may not include anyone who is not an Senedd Member.

3. Standing Orders do not prescribe which committees must be established. They give the Senedd freedom to design a committee structure that reflects the priorities and circumstances of the day. They do include requirements to ensure that key functions listed in Standing Orders are delivered by the committee structure.

4. The Senedd has decided on a committee structure which gives committees the power to both scrutinise the government and associated public bodies and to scrutinise legislation, within a subject remit.



5. The Senedd has committees set up to look at specific subjects. Each committee carries out tasks such as examining a proposed law (a Bill) or conducting an investigation into policy decisions made by the Welsh Government. The decisions a committee makes may be written into a report which can be discussed in Plenary by all Senedd Members.

6. Between them, the Senedd committees examine the areas of law that the Welsh Government is responsible for. These subjects are the areas of Welsh life that have been devolved to the Senedd from the UK Parliament in London.

7. Each Committee can examine a range of issues that fall into their area of interest (their remit). A committee's remit is indicated by its title. For example, in the Fifth Senedd the Children, Young People and Education Committee examined issues affecting Children and Young People.

8. A list of current Senedd committees can be found:

<https://senedd.wales/senedd-business/committees/>. There are often several committees that can examine a particular issue. For example, an issue related to children's health could potentially be examined by a number of committees, including:

- the Senedd Committee with the remit for Health;
- the Senedd Committee with the remit for children's issues;
- the Petitions Committee after receiving a petition related to children's health; or
- the Public Accounts Committee could look at the way in which the Welsh Government has spent money to improve children's health, etc.

9. Committees usually examine an issue through a process called an 'inquiry'.

10. An inquiry is an investigation into a certain topic to see what the Welsh Government is currently doing, and whether any improvements could be made. Examples of past inquiries include looking at whether school meals in Wales are healthy enough, whether Wales should have its own cricket team, and looking into the standard of services of neonatal care in Wales.

11. A committee can look at any subject matter within its remit. There are a number of places that ideas for committee inquiries can spring from. These include:

- Senedd Members' ideas, based on their political and personal experiences and interests or on contact with their constituents;
- suggestions from individuals and organisations (through contact with a committee as a whole, or with individual members);
- issues raised in the course of the wider proceedings of the Senedd (e.g. Petitions and budget scrutiny);
- work undertaken by previous committees (particularly at the start of a new Senedd);
- analysis of timely/potential issues of concern within a committee's remit, identified by the Research Service.

- 12.** If there is a particular issue you think a committee should look at in detail, you can contact them or your Senedd Members to suggest the idea. Typically, a Senedd committee will have a schedule for their work over at least the next three months, though new issues can sometimes be incorporated.
- 13.** When a new law (a Bill) is proposed, the [Business Committee](#) will choose which committee is responsible for examining the proposed new law. A committee will usually carry out an inquiry into the intended effect of the proposed law. The committee will then examine the proposed law in detail, and can make changes to the proposed law before it is considered by the whole Senedd. If the proposed law is agreed by the Senedd, it has to receive Royal Assent before it can become a law (it then becomes '**an Act of the Senedd**'). This process is described in detail in the '[Guide to the Legislative Process](#)'.
- 14.** Inquiries can be carried out in a number of ways. An inquiry could involve a committee collecting information from the public or from specific organisations. This information is often called 'evidence'. A committee sometimes collects evidence for several months, then produces a report and writes recommendations to the Welsh Government.
- 15.** Inquiries also sometimes consist of a committee collecting evidence for a shorter period of time, or they might result in a committee writing to a Welsh Government Minister with questions as a result of what they have heard, rather than producing a full report.
- 16.** Sometimes the committee will ask some of its members to form a mini-committee (or 'sub-committee') to look at a specific area or item of interest.
- 17.** To help them do their work, a committee is supported by a clerking team (which is responsible for the day to day administration of the committee's work) and a number of other officials. The roles of these officials are described in [Committees: Who's who?](#)

Preparing written or digital evidence

The 'call for written evidence'

18. When committees start investigating an issue, they will usually send out a general request for information to help them with their work. This is often referred to by committees as a 'call for evidence'. This may be about the main themes of the inquiry, but they may also ask specific questions.



19. This call for evidence will normally be posted on a committee's web page and a press release will be sent out to newspapers and other media. Anyone can respond to a call for evidence. Usually, a committee will also directly contact organisations that it thinks will be interested in the inquiry, or that it would specifically like to hear from.

20. The call for evidence will invite interested parties to submit evidence to the committee by a specified deadline. Evidence can be given to committees in writing or via a video or audio clip. It is normal practice for the Senedd to publish evidence provided to a committee on its website, so that this evidence becomes part of the public record.

21. Committees welcome contributions in English or Welsh, and ask organisations with Welsh Language policies or schemes to provide bilingual submissions, in line with their public information policies.

22. Committees will often use this evidence to decide if they would like to invite an organisation or an individual to come to a meeting and discuss the issue further. However, the time-frame of an inquiry will sometimes mean that meetings are scheduled before evidence is received (particularly when committees are examining laws).

23. Evidence can be given as a response to a committee's call for evidence, or it can be requested by a committee for a specific meeting.

What information should you include?

- 24.** A committee's 'call for evidence' will tell you about the issues they are looking at in their inquiry, the 'terms of reference' (what areas the inquiry will be covering), and any specific questions the committee wants answers to. Your evidence should focus on these issues, as a committee is unlikely to look at any information that covers issues outside the specific area it is looking at.
- 25.** If a committee has asked specific questions, you do not need to respond to all of them, but structuring your answers around these questions will help the committee to do its work more effectively.
- 26.** There are certain things that your evidence should not mention, including matters currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you think this might happen, please discuss with the clerk of the committee how this could affect the written evidence you wish to submit.


How should you put your written evidence together?

27. There is usually no prescribed style, or set requirements, for setting out written evidence. However, the evidence received by committees is usually published on the internet, and the Senedd seeks to ensure all its webpages are accessible to:

- enable people with disabilities to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with information on the web; and
- respond to the needs of people using slow internet connections, or using mobile devices.

28. You can help the Senedd to meet web content accessibility guide lines (and enable more people to access your evidence) by following the guidance below.

Please:

- keep the document brief – as a guideline, 3,000 words maximum;
- avoid acronyms and abbreviations. Where they are used please ensure they are spelled out in full the first time they are used;
- submit a single document (preferably as a Word document) as your paper, with any tables, spreadsheets and annexes incorporated into the paper;
- use headings for structure (we recommend using the standard word formatting of Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.);
- if you are including links in your paper, these should be written as descriptions of where a reader will go, should they follow that link (i.e. not ‘click here’);
- include tables only when they are necessary for the purpose of presenting structured content. If you are using tables, please ensure they are a table in the paper itself (i.e. please don’t include an image of a table). Please ensure a table is made up of labelled rows and columns. Any notes to the table should be as separate text (i.e. not be presented by the creation of additional rows unrelated to the column headings). If Excel SpreadSheets are provided, please ensure they are ‘print ready,’ so that the information contained within can easily be produced to a printable output on A4 paper, without any need to adjust the data contained within;
- include ‘alt-text’ for any images used in your document. Alt-text is a piece of ‘hidden’ text that describes an image used on a webpage or other electronic media, if for any reason a viewer cannot see the image itself. To add Alt Text you will typically (depending on your software) need to right click on the picture, select ‘Format Picture,’ and then the ‘’ icon (Layout and Properties). You will then be able to select ‘Alt Text.’ If in doubt about what alt-text to write, we recommend trying to imagine describing the image to someone over the phone.
- align text to the left hand margin;
- use font in at least size 12 (black colour);

- keep use of bold, underlining and italics to a minimum;
- use numbered paragraphs;
- use paper size A4 in portrait format;
- maintain a 1.5cm page margin (footnotes are fine, but headers/footers can be problematic);
- if you wish to include page numbers, site them on the left or right hand side of the page (to avoid clashing with the Senedd's own numbering of large packs of papers);
- email a copy of your written evidence to the clerking team by the agreed deadline;
- submit papers in a way that complies with any public information policies your organisation has (e.g. a bilingual information policy).

Please do not:

- refer to the committee as the Welsh Government, the Welsh Assembly Government or WAG. Senedd committees are not part of the Welsh Government, and Senedd committees include Senedd Members from all political parties;
- use tracked changes, revision marks or comments;
- send your written evidence directly to the committee members;
- submit a security marked PDF document;
- include your address or telephone number in the body of your paper.

Digital evidence

- 29.** If you wish to submit video or audio evidence, please contact the clerking team for advice on the best way to do this.
- 30.** Please do not submit any digital files (audio or video) embedded within another document. We need to be able to publish each file separately.

How to submit your evidence

31. Committees prefer to receive evidence by email (for both practical and sustainability purposes). Attach your paper or audio/video file and letter to an email and send it to the committee's mailbox. The email address will be in the committee's call for evidence, and is also shown on the committee's web pages.

32. Along with your submission, we recommend that your email includes the following information:

- your name and contact details as the person, or organisation, submitting the evidence;
- whether your evidence is submitted as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation;
- whether you would like the committee to treat any or all of your written evidence as confidential, with reasons for the request.

33. Alternatively, your papers can be sent in hard copy. Send them to the clerking team, at the address given in the call for evidence.

34. If you are concerned that you will not be able to meet the deadline, speak to the clerking team, who may be able to assist you (depending on the committee's own deadlines in a particular inquiry).

How will my evidence be used?

35. Written and digital evidence received by a committee may be used in a number of ways:

- by committee members to inform their inquiry;
- to identify where additional exploration of information would be useful (like arranging an oral evidence session);
- to highlight particular issues in their report;
- to support recommendations the committee wants to make;
- to scrutinise the Welsh Government (and associated public bodies) by providing issues the committee wants to investigate.

36. ‘Scrutinising’ means asking the Government questions, and holding it to account for its decisions.

Publication of evidence

37. Once evidence has been received, the committee will normally make these documents available on its web pages, although committees can also decide not to publish documents that might contain sensitive material.

38. The Senedd will not seek to publish information which it considers to be personal data (with the exception of personal opinion and personal data relating to your identity as author of the evidence and the capacity, if any, in which you provide the evidence - for example, your name and job title). However, in the event of a request for information submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it may be necessary to disclose other personal information that you provide.

39. If you are providing any information (other than personal data) that you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, or if you do not wish your identity as author of the evidence to be disclosed, you must state this clearly. It is up to you to say which parts should not be published and to provide a reasoned argument for that.

40. The Senedd will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information. It is possible that restricting your evidence may impact on the way the committee is able to use it.



Committees: who's who?

- 41.** A committee is made up of Senedd Members from the different political parties represented at the Senedd.
- 42.** One of these Senedd Members is elected by the Senedd to be the committee chair. During a committee meeting, the committee's Chair usually sits at the head of the table, and is responsible for running the meeting. The Chair will aim to ensure that there is a fair balance of opportunities for committee members to ask questions and for witnesses to respond.
- 43.** The number of members on a committee varies. A committee's webpage will list the names of the Senedd Members who are part of the committee.
- 44.** If a Member cannot attend a particular committee meeting, they may ask another member of their political party to attend instead.
- 45.** Ministers are not members of committees.



- 46.** In addition to the committee members, a number of officials may be present at a committee meeting:
 - the committee clerk advises the chair on procedural matters and is responsible for the overall running of the committee's business;
 - the deputy committee clerk assists the clerk in his/her duties and takes a note of key things that happen in the meeting;

- the Record of Proceedings official takes notes throughout the meeting for producing a full transcript of proceedings;
- the researcher(s) provides committee members with written briefings and further advice or information at the meeting if required. They follow the proceedings of the meeting to gather information for future work;
- the legal adviser(s) advises the committee on points of law and any legal issues that arise during the meeting;
- the committee support officer shows witnesses in and out of the meeting room and explains practical aspects to them, such as use of the headsets. The committee support officer is on hand to assist the clerk and deputy clerk during the meeting;
- simultaneous translators and broadcasting engineers are in the background at meetings (behind the tinted glass screens in the committee rooms or as a 'non-video participant' for remote meetings), to provide translation in different languages, and make sure any technology used in the meeting runs smoothly.



Preparing to attend a committee meeting

47. If you have been asked to attend a committee meeting, you will probably also have been asked to provide information in advance of this. This will help the committee members prepare their questions. It is also useful to put factual information on the record.

48. Many people use the same information for a committee meeting as the one they provided (or are in the process of providing) in response to a committee's call for written and digital evidence. If you want to do this, just let the clerking team know.

49. If you would like to provide additional information please let the clerking team know. They will advise you of deadlines.

Hearing oral evidence

50. The committee will usually invite people in to answer questions about the subject of the inquiry. This will be done at a committee meeting called an ‘oral evidence session’.

51. Oral evidence sessions normally take place in public where people can watch them online or attend in person. Committee members will ask questions to people giving them information (often referred to as ‘witnesses’), usually about the issues described in the written or visual evidence they have already given.

52. The meeting will be broadcast on [Senedd TV](https://www.senedd.tv). Senedd TV broadcasts all Senedd meetings for people to watch online (you can also watch recordings of previous committee meetings at www.senedd.tv). A written record (or ‘transcript’) will be produced, which will be sent to the witnesses for them to check a week after the meeting. A draft transcript will be published on the committee’s web pages one week after the meeting.

53. People who speak to committees are often called ‘witnesses.’ This word can sound intimidating, but really it just means that the committee is going to ask that person for extra information to help with their inquiry.

54. A committee will discuss and agree on a list of witnesses who they want to invite to speak with them. This process is often referred to as ‘giving oral evidence’. The clerking team for the committee will contact those people to invite them to a committee meeting.

55. During the Fifth Senedd, until the Covid-19 pandemic, committees normally met in a committee room in the Senedd, but could also meet in Tŷ Hywel (the red brick building attached to the Senedd), and occasionally in other locations across Wales. Most committee meetings were held in public, with space available in the public galleries for people to come along and watch.

56. Under emergency procedures introduced as a result of Covid-19 to protect public health, committees can also meet remotely online by video conference.



This might be either a completely remote meeting, or meeting in a 'hybrid' form, when some people are in a committee room and others join in by video conference from other locations. The clerking team will provide advice and guidance to witnesses on how the committee meeting will work and what to expect. Meetings that take place remotely by video conference will still be broadcast on Senedd TV.

57. Committees can either take evidence from one organisation or individual at a time, or they can arrange organisations or individuals into panels.

58. Panels are usually used if a committee wants to ask similar questions to a number of different witnesses. This can be useful if a committee has limited time for taking evidence. It can also be useful for witnesses who might work with other organisations that cover different areas of the same issue.

59. Committee members may ask questions to the panel as a whole, or direct them to a specific witness. If you are giving evidence at the same time as another witness, you do not have to answer a question if you are satisfied that another witness has already answered it. You can tell the committee that you agree with the answer provided by the other witness.



Preparing for a committee meeting

- 60.** The committee clerking team will contact you about giving evidence prior to the committee meeting. This will normally be at least three weeks in advance of the meeting date, although this may vary, particularly if the committee is looking at a possible new law ('scrutinising legislation').
- 61.** You will normally be asked to provide a written paper to the committee around ten working days in advance of the meeting to set out your views on the issues being considered by the committee. The majority of the questions that the committee asks you will be based on the issues you have raised in your paper.
- 62.** If you are unable to give oral evidence to the committee in person, please contact the clerking team, who can discuss other options with you. These could include giving evidence by video or audio conference link. Please do this as far as possible in advance to allow suitable arrangements to be made.
- 63.** Evidence sessions in committee are time-limited, and as a witness you will be responding to questions from Senedd Members rather than making a presentation (so PowerPoint is not normally available).

How the committee's clerking team can help you

- 64.** The committee's clerking team will inform you of the exact date, time and location of the meeting at least a week before the meeting, and arrange for you to have a copy of the agenda and committee papers as soon as they are available.
- 65.** The clerking team can also advise you if other witnesses are appearing at the same session as you. If other witnesses are scheduled to appear prior to your appearance, you may choose to attend earlier and listen to evidence given by these witnesses. This information will also be available on the meeting's agenda.
- 66.** The clerking team may be able to give you advice on what you might be asked about, to help you prepare for the session. However, any advanced briefing is at the committee's discretion and the committee may ask questions outside the given brief.
- 67.** Spaces at, in person, hybrid or remote, committee meetings are limited. It is not usually possible for more than two people from one organisation to attend a committee meeting, and usually only one if you are giving evidence at the same time as witnesses from other organisations. If you know in advance that several people from your organisation want to attend a meeting in the Senedd, the clerking team can help by arranging seats in the public gallery or possibly in a space behind the committee table, though this will depend on space and availability.
- 68.** Committees understand that providing oral evidence in the formal committee setting can be daunting. Provided there is space at the meeting, it is permissible for a witness to bring along someone to provide support. The supporter does not give evidence at the meeting (and often does not sit at the meeting table in the committee room) as they are not a witness, but they can provide emotional support through their presence in the room. Parents, teachers and youth-work leaders have attended meetings in the past in this role. The clerking team can give specific advice on a supporter's role, as required.
- 69.** The clerking team's role is to help you give the best evidence you can. You can also ask the clerking team to help with anything part of the process. In particular they can help you by:

- explaining any jargon/words associated with committee meetings which you are not familiar with (e.g. 'evidence,' 'witness,' 'inquiry,' 'scrutiny'...);
- explaining what will happen before, during and after you have given evidence;
- helping you to familiarise yourself with the Senedd buildings and processes (for example, you might want to observe an earlier committee meeting, either in person, or on Senedd TV);
- helping you to familiarise yourself with Zoom or any of the computer applications or technical equipment used by the Committee;
- explaining the rules of committee procedures, dress code and behaviour in formal committee meetings.

How you can help the committee's clerking team

70. The clerking team needs to know the following information in advance of any meetings you will be attending:

- the names and job titles of the people who will be appearing as witnesses. Where the witness is an organisation, it is usually left to the organisation to decide which of its members or staff should attend the meeting however Committees may occasionally request the attendance of specific individuals or post-holders. If you have not notified the clerking team of the names of representatives from your organisation, the Senedd security team may refuse entry to the room where the meeting is being held;
- if you have any specific needs (for example if you are visually impaired or have specific access needs). The Senedd and Tŷ Hywel committee rooms are fully accessible to those with a disability and we are able to make additional arrangements if notified in advance.
- if you know that matters which may arise during oral evidence are currently before a court of law, or court proceedings are imminent; if you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss this with the clerk of the committee;

Attending a Committee Meeting: on the day of the meeting

Arrival

- 71.** This section relates to attending a meeting in the Senedd or Tŷ Hywel. If you are attending a meeting via video conference or in a different building the Clerking team will issue you with separate instructions on how to do so.
- 72.** There are two public car parks near the Senedd, with a small charge for short stays. In special circumstances, a visitor parking space may be reserved at the Senedd by contacting the clerking team. If you have asked for a disabled parking space to be booked, this will be adjacent to the Senedd, via the barrier in front of Tŷ Hywel. These are also subject to availability and presentation of a valid Blue Badge on arrival.
- 73.** We recommend that you arrive at least 20 minutes before you are scheduled to provide oral evidence to the committee. An airport-style security check is carried out on every visitor to the Senedd on arrival. After passing through the security scanners, please report to the reception desk in the Senedd. Reception staff will take your name, provide you with a security pass, and direct you downstairs to the witness waiting room, where other witnesses may also be waiting. Reception staff can print out agendas of meetings on request.
- 74.** Oral evidence is also taken in the Committee Rooms in Tŷ Hywel. If you are providing evidence in one of these rooms, you will be asked (in advance by the clerking team) to go to the Tŷ Hywel entrance. There, you will go through airport-style security checks, be provided with a security pass at the Tŷ Hywel reception, and be directed to a waiting room.
- 75.** The committee's support officer will normally meet you in the witness waiting room (either in the Senedd or Tŷ Hywel), and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. S/he will also demonstrate how to use the headsets that provide a simultaneous translation of any Welsh spoken in the meeting and also amplification of sound, if required.
- 76.** When the committee is ready, the support officer will collect you from the waiting room and show you to the committee room.



77. If you are providing oral evidence via video conference, the clerking team will usually establish the video link with you during a break in the formal meeting prior to the beginning of your evidence to make sure everything is working correctly and answer any questions you may have.

During the meeting

78. Once in the committee room you may be asked to make a brief opening statement to the members of the committee before they begin asking questions. You can choose to accept or decline this offer (if you want to decline this offer, just say that you are happy for them to go straight into questions).

79. Committee members will have received your paper before the meeting, so an opening statement should be very brief. Opening remarks can be limited to who you are (or what your organisation is), what your interest in the inquiry is, and possibly one or two key issues that you would like members to give particular consideration to. Members will then ask questions, primarily based on your evidence, but also taking account of other information they have received.

80. The Senedd committees operate bilingually. You are welcome to address the committee and answer questions in Welsh or English. Members are also able to use either language during proceedings. During the meeting simultaneous interpretation will be available from Welsh to English.

81. If you feel that you do not have the information you need to answer a question, or if there is more detailed information that may be useful to support your answer, you may offer to provide the committee with a note supplying the relevant information. Likewise, committee members may ask you to provide written information to supplement your answer. This should be supplied to the clerking team as soon as possible after the meeting.

82. During the meeting, if you feel it would be outside the remit of your role to express an opinion on a particular question, or that a question is otherwise 'unfair', you can say so to the committee's chair. However, you may still be asked to try to answer the question if the committee collectively decides that it is reasonable.

83. A committee meeting room is normally set out in a boardroom fashion with microphones placed around the table. The microphones are necessary for interpretation, amplification and broadcasting purposes. A red light indicates when your microphone is operating. This is controlled by the broadcast engineer who is watching proceedings, so there is no need for you to



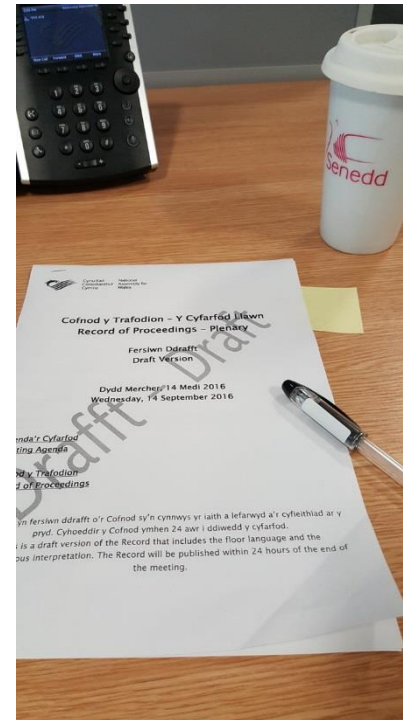
press any of the buttons. Please do not move the microphones as this affects the quality of the sound in the room.

84. Most committee business is held in public and broadcast live on the internet on the [Senedd TV](#) website. A verbatim (word for word) transcript of each public meeting is produced. All sessions are archived and can be viewed on the [Senedd TV](#) website. The meeting may also be broadcast on [BBC Democracy Live](#) and on television at a later date (at present, proceedings may be shown on S4C and BBC Parliament).

After the meeting

85. After the meeting you will be sent a copy of the draft transcript for correction, along with **guidance notes** about how to let the clerking team know if there are any inaccuracies in the text. You will be asked to return the corrected draft by a specified date, after which the transcript will be published. You may also be sent a feedback form so you can tell the clerking team about your experience.

86. At the end of its inquiry, the committee will consider all the evidence it has received, and decide on the key themes and issues. It will then produce a report and some recommendations based on the evidence received in the inquiry. The clerking team will let you know when the report has been published.



Other kinds of evidence

87. As well as asking for written evidence, and hearing oral evidence, a committee might find out information in other ways. It could produce a survey or questionnaire to gather views, or arrange visits to gather information in a specific place, for example. Clerking teams are happy to discuss different ways of taking evidence that you think may be more appropriate to you or your organisation.

88. In the past, committees have gathered evidence in a variety of ways, including:

Informal committee meetings

89. These can take place inside or away from the Senedd, and are not recorded word for word (or 'verbatim'). Informal committee meetings are usually based around a more relaxed discussion where witnesses feel comfortable asking questions to the committee members or to each other. Notes of informal discussions can be taken if the witnesses agree to this.

These notes can then be used for more formal committee 'business' (such as a committee report). Witnesses can remain anonymous in the notes if they prefer. Meetings that take place outside the Senedd can be based in settings that witnesses are more familiar with, which can make discussions less intimidating for people taking part.



Visits

90. Committee visits can involve one or more members of a committee visiting a specific place or project to learn more about it.

91. Alternatively, a visit could involve meeting with witnesses on an informal basis, usually in a familiar setting for witnesses, to gather evidence and report back to the committee. Notes of discussions are sometimes taken, and these notes can then be agreed and used for more formal committee business (again, such as a committee reports).

Use of technology

92. Online voting systems or surveys can help committees to engage with a wider audience in a more informal way.



Considering everything - reporting

93. The committee will look at all the evidence gathered during its inquiry, and agree any proposals ('recommendations') that it wants to make to the Welsh Government on how the Government could improve its work. Sometimes a summary of the main themes that emerged from the evidence is produced for the committee. Committees can report on their inquiry in a number of ways, including producing a full report, or writing to the relevant Welsh Government Minister.

94. Whatever the committee produces will normally be published, and will be made available on the committee's web pages. It will be sent electronically to anybody who has provided evidence, and also sent to the Welsh Government.



Following up on the report

95. The Welsh Government will answer any recommendations that have been made by the committee. This usually happens within six weeks of a report being published. A committee is able to request a debate in Plenary (a meeting of all 60 Senedd Members) on any report it has produced. Debating a report in Plenary allows Members from all political parties to comment on the committee's inquiry and the Welsh Government's response, as well as allowing committee members to pursue particular issues; for example, recommendations that have not been agreed. A committee may revisit its reports to follow up on the progress made by the Welsh Government towards implementing the recommendations.

96. When a committee reports on legislation, the process is slightly different, as the reports and responses are part of specific stages. More information on the legislative process can be found in our [Guide to the Legislative Process](#).