

# **Fifth Senedd Legacy Report**

March 2021



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# About the Committee

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016. Its remit can be found at:  
[www.senedd.wales/SeneddCommunities](http://www.senedd.wales/SeneddCommunities)

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## Committee Chair:



**John Griffiths MS**  
Welsh Labour

## Current Committee membership:



**Dawn Bowden MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Huw Irranca-Davies MS**  
Welsh Labour



**Delyth Jewell MS**  
Plaid Cymru



**Laura Anne Jones MS**  
Welsh Conservatives



**Mandy Jones MS**  
Independent Alliance for Reform  
Group

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## Chair's foreword

I am proud of the Committee's work over the past five years. We have covered a broad range of issues, both policy and legislation. We have helped push issues up the political agenda, such as our early work looking at the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, which helped inform the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan. We have consistently highlighted the inequality and unfairness still blighting our communities. The lack of equality of opportunity and outcome. The need for a more focused and comprehensive strategy to tackle poverty in Wales. These concerns ran through our work throughout this Senedd term and remain. We have also led the political debate with work looking at devolution of welfare benefits, and prisoner voting. We have shown adaptability to respond to national events, such as our work looking at fire safety in high rise buildings immediately following the horrific events at Grenfell; and over the last year on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our systematic approach to follow up work has meant that throughout the term, we have continued to seek real and meaningful progress to tackle the scourge of rough sleeping; and speed up pace with the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. I would encourage all Senedd committees in the next term to prioritise follow-up work as this can be the most effective tool in driving through change.

I would like to thank all the stakeholders and citizens who have helped inform our work. In particular, those citizens who have shared their own lived experience, which has often been challenging, of a range of issues from seeking asylum; rough sleeping; juggling parenting with employment; and most recently the safety of living in high rise buildings. This lived experience really adds an extra layer to our scrutiny, and the recommendations we make for change. And to give my grateful thanks to members of the committee, present and past, together with our dedicated and professional team of committee clerks and researchers for their invaluable service and support.

**John Griffiths MS**

Committee Chair

## 1. Committee remit and workload

Our remit is very broad and means we have been responsible for a significant proportion of all legislation considered by the Senedd. We think this should be taken into account when drawing up committee structures and remits in the Sixth Senedd.

- 1.** All Senedd committees in the current term have had very broad remits. However, the breadth of our remit combined with our heavy legislative workload throughout this Senedd, has made it particularly challenging to manage our capacity at particular points during this Senedd term.
- 2.** This was also a challenge for our predecessor Committee in the Fourth Assembly; the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee (“CELG”), whose remit had also included culture, media, sport and the Welsh language. It recommended in its legacy report that a dedicated Communications Committee should be established in the Fifth Assembly.<sup>1</sup> This recommendation was implemented, with the establishment of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee at the outset of the Fifth Assembly. The sport element of the CELG Committee’s remit became part of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.
- 3.** This narrowing of the remit is to be welcomed, but the remit has remained incredibly broad, making it challenging to do full justice to all the areas we cover. This is before we take into account the impact on our work programme of a heavy legislative workload, and Covid-19.

### Committee remit:

The Committee was established on 28 June 2016 to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing (but not restricted to): local government; housing, community regeneration, cohesion and safety; tackling poverty; equality of opportunity and human rights. On 13 November 2019, the Committee’s remit was amended to include the ability to: exercise the non-

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<sup>1</sup> [Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee, Fourth Assembly Legacy Report, March 2016](#)



budgetary functions set out in Standing Order 18A.2 in relation to accountability and governance of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

- 4.** We highlighted this issue in our response to the Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform who sought our views on the impact of any change of size of the then Assembly on committees.<sup>2</sup> Much of what we set out in this letter, we still believe is relevant, and should be considered when developing committee structures and remits in the Sixth Senedd. We set out the key points below.
- 5.** When looking at other legislatures across the UK, the Senedd is the only one which combines the equality portfolio with the housing and local government portfolio within the remit of a single committee. The Scottish Parliament is the closest comparator because, as in the current Senedd, its committees undertake both policy and legislative scrutiny. It split these two elements of our portfolio between two committees during the 2016 - 2021 session, the Equalities and Human Rights Committee and the Local Government and Communities Committee. Additionally, other aspects of our work sat with other committees at the Scottish Parliament, for example, during our work on the devolution of benefits, we met with the Social Security Committee.
- 6.** The Northern Ireland Assembly has a similar model, with committees undertaking both policy and legislative scrutiny. Again, our portfolio is split between two committees; Executive (which covers equality and human rights as part of its remit); and Communities (covering housing and local government.)
- 7.** The comparison with Westminster is less direct, as select committees are not responsible for legislative scrutiny for introduced Bills. However, it is worth noting that they also split their policy scrutiny for matters within our remit across two main committees: Housing, Communities and Local Government; and Women and Equalities. There is also an additional committee; the Joint Committee on Human Rights, with membership drawn from across both the Houses of Commons and the Lords.
- 8.** We are aware that at Westminster, there is a Select Committee for each government department, and we note the merits of that approach. However, there are factors which make this more challenging in the Welsh context - primarily because there are no separate Government departments in Wales with separate Permanent Secretaries. The Welsh Government has a single Permanent

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<sup>2</sup> [Letter from Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Chair to Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform Chair, 27 January 2020](#)

Secretary, whereas in Whitehall, each ministerial department has a Permanent Secretary responsible for the day to day running of the department. The Permanent Secretary is accountable to Parliament for the stewardship of the department's budget and ensuring Value for Money. As ministerial reshuffles can often involve significant changes of responsibility, such a structure means it is more likely that committee structures could end up looking out of date or not reflecting Government structures. However, setting this aside, as a point of principle, we believe it makes more sense to have committee portfolios that more closely reflect ministerial portfolios.

## Legislative workload

**9.** Despite the change in the portfolio of this Committee compared with our predecessor in the Fourth Assembly, the proportion of legislation we have considered is similar; we have scrutinised 27% of all legislation introduced in this Senedd. In total, we have considered 6 out of the 22 Bills introduced. This figure would have been higher if the Regulation of Registered Social Landlords (Wales) Act 2018 had not been referred to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee, because we were already considering two other Bills concurrently when it was introduced. We were also expecting to consider the Social Partnerships Bill, but its introduction was postponed due to the pandemic. A high proportion of the legislation introduced in recent years relates to housing. It seems likely that any committee which has housing within its remit will continue to be responsible for undertaking a significant amount of legislative scrutiny in the next Senedd. We would like this to be considered when committee remits are agreed in the Sixth Senedd.

**10.** Legislative scrutiny is core business, but as we do not have any control over when Bills are introduced, and our views on timetabling are not always implemented, it can be more difficult for us to manage our wider workloads, and ensure we can undertake the policy scrutiny we may wish to do.

**11.** Neither the issue of our broad remit, nor the heavy legislative workload is particularly problematic on its own, but the combination of the two has made it more difficult for us to manage such a broad portfolio.

**12.** We would reiterate our calls in our letter to the Committee on Assembly Electoral Reform, that legislative workloads should be taken into account when developing committee structures in the Sixth Senedd.

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## 2. Working practices

We have developed a number of ways of working which we believe are effective, and could be useful for future committees to consider.

**13.** During this Senedd term, we have utilised both formal and informal means to gather evidence and engage with the people of Wales to inform our work. For each of the policy and legislative issues we have considered, we formed terms of reference and sought views from interested organisations or individuals. Every inquiry or area of Bill scrutiny has been published on our website, usually accompanied by a formal request for written evidence and publicised through ours and the Senedd's social media channels.

**14.** The majority of our evidence gathering has been through formal committee meetings, where witnesses have been invited to present evidence to inform our considerations of a range of policy and legislation areas. Prior to entering lockdown in March 2020, we were allocated a weekly meeting slot to undertake our business. The allocated slots were on alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays, enabling us to meet on a Wednesday morning and all day on a Thursday, fortnightly. These slots were primarily used to hold formal meetings on the Senedd estate, which Members and invited witnesses mostly attended in person; video conference facilities were occasionally used to facilitate the attendance of witnesses who were unable to attend in person.

**15.** Engaging with the citizens of Wales has been a crucial element of our work throughout this Senedd term. In addition to the formal evidence sessions, we also used informal means of gathering views from people who would be less likely or unable to attend a formal meeting. We specifically allocated some of our meeting slots to undertake informal visits and hold focus groups to meet with individuals directly affected by policy areas. These informal approaches were particularly useful to hear from people with lived experience as part of our work on prisoner voting, rough sleeping and refugee and asylum seekers. We also used online surveys to gather views from a wider audience, who may not have responded to the formal calls for written evidence.

**16.** The input of citizens into this work has directly shaped our choice of work, recommendations and outputs. For example, during our work on rough sleeping, after extensive engagement with people with lived experience, we undertook further specific investigation into the problems of rough sleepers with both

mental health and substance misuse issues. We would not have focused on these particular issues without hearing directly from those with the lived experience. Our citizen engagement work has been a particularly valuable aspect of our work throughout this term. We hope that this is built upon in the next Senedd term.

**17.** In response to the national lockdown which began in March 2020, we adapted our ways of working so that meetings could be held virtually. All of our meetings since then have been fully virtual, with Members, staff and witnesses attending from different locations.

**18.** This enabled us to continue with our work and we began by undertaking an inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on matters related to our portfolio. We used Zoom to hold formal committee meetings with Welsh Government Ministers and external organisations. During this period we also undertook Stage 2 scrutiny of two Bills. Stage two proceedings were also conducted remotely, however the Chair and Clerk attended from the same location within Tŷ Hywel so that procedural advice could be provided.

**19.** Our use of these facilities has demonstrated that formal Senedd business can continue even when Members are unable to physically be in the same location and emphasises the wider benefits of remote attendance on increasing participation in business.

**20.** Our pre-pandemic work on increasing diversity in local government recognised the valuable contribution that remote attendance at formal meetings could make to enabling a wider range of people to get involved in local government.<sup>3</sup> Since March 2020, the virtual nature of all Senedd business has proven that remote attendance is as effective as physically attending a meeting. It has also brought the additional benefits of not needing to travel, such as better work/life balance, enabling more time for caring responsibilities and participating in a wider range of meetings. We have embraced this new way of working and believe there should be a wider role for remote attendance at Senedd committee meetings when restrictions are lifted.

**21.** We have also been able to use Zoom and Teams facilities to continue our citizen engagement work during the pandemic. The nature of our work in understanding the implications of Covid-19, in particular when we considered the impact on the voluntary sector, meant it was crucial for us to be able to hear from people with direct experience. We have always found focus groups to be a useful

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<sup>3</sup> [ELGC Committee. Diversity in local government. April 2019](#)

forum to gather these views, so instead of travelling to meet with people from across Wales, we held these through Teams.

**22.** The wider benefits of holding these meetings virtually were clear both for Members and participants; instead of travelling to a specified location to meet in person, participants were able to contribute from their own homes or offices, which offered more convenience to all involved. Face to face engagement usually provides wider benefits than only meeting with citizens, such as witnessing projects first hand, therefore it will be important that committees continue to facilitate such meetings when restrictions allow. However, given their benefits in enabling wider participation, greater use of virtual meetings should also be part of a mixed approach to citizen engagement in future.

### Following up on earlier work

**23.** We decided early on in the Senedd term that scrutinising the progress made in implementing our recommendations would be one of the most effective ways of ensuring change happens as a result of our work. Such follow up work has been an integral part of our activities throughout this Senedd.

**24.** Our first area of work in 2016 was post-legislative scrutiny of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, which focussed on whether that Act was working.<sup>4</sup> Since then, we continued to review the legislation periodically by holding further evidence sessions in 2018 and 2020 to assess the progress made. This was also an important consideration of our work on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the various aspects within our remit.

**25.** We published our first report on rough sleeping in April 2018<sup>5</sup>, and since then we have undertaken extensive follow up work to assess progress and ensure changes are implemented. As part of this, we have continued to push for the step change we believed was needed in meeting our ambition to end rough sleeping. We published a follow up report which focused on mental health and substance misuse amongst people sleeping rough in December 2019.<sup>6</sup> This was a priority area for us throughout this Senedd and we continued to scrutinise the Welsh Government on the matter, including through our work on the impact of Covid-19.

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<sup>4</sup> [ELGC Committee. Is the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015 working? December 2016](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ELGC Committee. Life on the streets: preventing and tackling rough sleeping in Wales. April 2018](#)

<sup>6</sup> [ELGC Committee. Rough sleeping follow up: Mental health and substance misuse services, December 2019](#)

**26.** Since the Grenfell tragedy, fire safety in high-rise buildings has been a priority area of work for us. We began our work by looking into the safety of [high rise residential buildings in the social sector](#). We followed this by looking at private sector buildings<sup>7</sup> and our final substantive piece of work at the end of this Senedd was to respond to the consultation on the Welsh Government's White Paper - Safer Buildings in Wales.

**27.** We believe that our commitment to following up previous work has been very effective in ensuring that those matters continue to receive the focus needed to result in change. By continuing to pursue these issues we demonstrated to the Welsh Government that our work doesn't finish when a report is published and that we expect to see changes as a result of our recommendations. Following up in this way is one of the most effective ways of scrutinising Welsh Government policies and actions, and we believe this approach should be embedded in future committees' work practices.

### Joint committee working

**28.** Given the crossover between the remits of various committees, we have undertaken work jointly with others where appropriate. We held a concurrent meeting with the Finance Committee and Children, Young People and Education Committee, which was particularly valuable in bringing different perspectives together to scrutinise how the impact of budget decisions are assessed. The recommendations we made in our report were followed up by the three committees during our scrutiny of the draft budgets for subsequent years.

**29.** We found this joint approach to be effective and believe there could be a greater role for committees to work together on issues of interest, particularly should remits remain broad in the Sixth Senedd. Joint working has not always been easy to facilitate when committees are allocated specific meeting slots, which are difficult to deviate away from. However a more flexible approach to scheduling meetings such as increased opportunities to use virtual or hybrid formats could enable greater use of joint meetings in the future.

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<sup>7</sup> [ELGC Committee. Fire safety in high-rise residential buildings \(private sector\). November 2018](#)

### 3. Priorities for the Sixth Senedd

The impact of the pandemic has meant that we have not been able to undertake all the work that we would have liked. There are also some issues we believe would benefit from scrutiny in the next Senedd.

**30.** The combined impact of the pandemic and the legislative workload has meant that we have not been able to do all the work we have decided upon, some of this is follow up work and some are new pieces. We believe there would be merit in a future successor committee[s] to consider looking at these issues in more detail.

#### COVID-19 follow-up

##### Homelessness and rough sleeping

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**31.** Homelessness, and particularly rough sleeping, has been a priority for us throughout this Senedd term, however the importance of tackling this issue became even more paramount during the Covid-19 pandemic. We scrutinised the Welsh Government on its actions at our first scrutiny session with the Minister for Housing and Local Government in May 2020 and followed up on this until our final meeting in March 2021. We welcome the focus given to this issue by the Welsh Government to ensure that accommodation was provided for those in need. We praise the excellent work done in the sector to house over 7000 people since the start of the pandemic, however we strongly believe that this work needs to continue in order to prevent all forms of homelessness. We are aware that some of those given temporary accommodation are now back on the street. Although the number is lower than before the pandemic, we remain concerned that the number could continue to increase without a continued focus on the services that are needed.

**32.** We are particularly concerned that the number of homeless presentations could increase substantially should the current protections restricting evictions and extending notice periods be brought to an end. We raised this with the Minister for Housing and Local Government on 11 March 2021, and a subsequent Cabinet Statement on 17 March confirmed that the protections would remain in place until the end of June 2021. We welcome this extension, but believe the situation should be monitored to assess whether further extension is required. We

recommend that continuing to scrutinise the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness is an area of urgent priority for our successor committee in the Sixth Senedd.

### The Voluntary Sector

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**33.** We conducted a short inquiry into the impact of the pandemic on the voluntary sector. Our report published in January 2021<sup>8</sup>, highlighted the essential role the voluntary sector had played in responding to the pandemic. We made a number of recommendations, including on the voluntary sector infrastructure in Wales; resources and finances; the BAME voluntary sector and the role the sector can play in Covid-19 recovery. We received the Welsh Government response to our recommendations in the final week of committee business. The Welsh Government accepted or accepted in principle all our recommendations.<sup>9</sup> We believe that a future committee should consider and review the implementation of these recommendations.

### Socio-economic duty

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**34.** Following a delay due to the impact of the pandemic, the socio-economic duty was commenced at the end of March. It requires listed public authorities to consider how their strategic decisions can improve inequality of outcomes for people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage. Through various aspects of our work during this Senedd, we have repeatedly called for its commencement. In our report on the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities, we recommended that the Welsh Government should adhere to the spirit and intent of the duty in all of its decision-making until it is commenced, and develop interim arrangements to monitor how it is meeting the spirit of the duty ahead of full commencement.

**35.** We believe that the socio-economic duty should be one of the key tools in the Welsh Government's plans to re-build following Covid-19. We therefore recommend to our successor committee that this may be an area of early priority, in particular whether or how the duty has influenced decisions taken by the Welsh Government and listed authorities.

### Poverty

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**36.** The prevalence and impact of poverty in Wales has been an area of significant concern both for us, and our predecessor committee. We have repeatedly made the case for the need for a cross cutting, comprehensive tackling

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<sup>8</sup> [ELGC Committee. Impact of COVID-19 on the voluntary sector. February 2021](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Welsh Government response to Impact of COVID-19 on the voluntary sector. March 2021](#)

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poverty strategy with clear targets, deliverables and milestones which progress can be assessed against. It has been a matter of disappointment that this has never been accepted or implemented by the Welsh Government. The impact of Covid-19 on people on low incomes was explored in our report on the pandemic, *Into Sharp Relief*.<sup>10</sup> We highlighted that poverty has been a key determinant in the pandemic, from mortality rates to the risk of losing work or income, and educational attainment to overcrowded housing. The impact on low income households must be a key consideration for the Welsh Government in its recovery plans, and we recommend to our successor committee that it continues to prioritise the Welsh Government's approach to tackling poverty.

### Race Equality Action Plan

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**37.** The impact of Covid-19 on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities has been significant over the past year, and has been an area of focus in our Covid-19 work. Professor Ogbonna's report recommended that the Welsh Government's should immediately recommence work on developing a Race Equality Action Plan. This will be published for consultation by the end of March 2021, and we recommend that our successor committee prioritises scrutinising progress in developing the plan and implementing its actions.

### Other follow up work

#### Pregnancy, Maternity and Work

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**38.** As we have outlined above, a key feature of our approach has been regular follow up on progress in implementing our recommendations. As part of our work in the final term of this Senedd, we agreed to follow up our inquiry into Pregnancy, Maternity and Work. We published our report in September 2018.<sup>11</sup> However at the time of publication there were a number of different pieces of work being undertaken by the Welsh Government, such as the Gender Equality Review; the Fair Work Commission; and a review of public procurement, which could have an impact on the implementation of some of the recommendations. The pandemic has also clearly had an impact on those juggling work and childcare. We had intended to revisit the recommendations through both oral evidence sessions and citizen engagement. However, the lockdown restrictions

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<sup>10</sup> [ELGC Committee, \*Into sharp relief: inequality and the pandemic\*, August 2020](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ELGC Committee, \*Work it out: parenting and employment in Wales\*, July 2018](#)

which began at the end of December led to us having to reconsider our work programme, and pausing this work.

**39.** We therefore believe there is real merit in this issue being looked at in more detail at the outset of the next Senedd.

### Public Services Boards

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**40.** We took a range of evidence looking at the structure, governance and resourcing, and best practice of Public Services Boards (PSBs) in 2018. We did not publish a report, as it became clear that it was difficult to come to conclusions about their effectiveness at that stage. We made a commitment to revisit this towards the end of the Senedd term, once more assessment could be made about the effectiveness of the Well-Being plans, and how they were working.

**41.** Unfortunately, due to the impact of the pandemic, we were unable to undertake this work as planned. However, we have touched upon the work of PSBs in a range of other policy work, including the impact of COVID-19 on the voluntary sector, and general COVID-19 scrutiny. We also note the work of the Public Accounts Committee at the end of this Senedd looking at the barriers to successful implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.<sup>12</sup> One of the issues highlighted during our evidence sessions was the complex landscape within which PSBs are operating. They sit alongside a plethora of statutory and multi-agency partnerships, formed on a local, sub-regional and regional basis. We think this is an issue that would merit further consideration in the next Senedd.

### Poverty in Wales: Making the economy work for people on low incomes

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**42.** This was a wide ranging piece of work which we published in May 2018, that covered areas such as the Welsh Government's strategic approach to economic development; employability; procurement; pay; quality of work and benefits.<sup>13</sup> As a result of this report, we undertook further detailed work looking at the desirability of devolving welfare benefits.<sup>14</sup> However, we were not able to revisit the rest of the work due to the pandemic. As with the pregnancy, maternity and work inquiry, there were a number of on-going work streams within the Welsh Government at the time of responding. These included the Procurement Review, development of the approach to a Foundational Economy; and the Fair Work Commission; all of

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<sup>12</sup> [Public Accounts Committee, Delivering for Future Generations: The Story So Far, March 2021](#)

<sup>13</sup> [ELGC Committee, Making the economy work for people on low incomes, May 2018](#)

<sup>14</sup> [ELGC Committee, Benefits in Wales: options for better delivery, October 2019](#)

which will have had an impact on addressing the issues we highlighted in the report. We believe this is an important area of work for a future committee.

### Building Safety in high rise residential buildings

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**43.** We have been considering this important issue since the tragic events at Grenfell in 2017. We have looked at the issue in relation to social and private sector housing, and culminating in our recent consultation response to the Welsh Government's White Paper on building safety. The Welsh Government has made a number of commitments outside of the White Paper, including the establishment of a building remediation fund which will go "further than that proposed in England."<sup>15</sup>

**44.** It is expected that there will be legislation introduced in the next Senedd to address some of these issues. We believe it is essential though that the relevant committee continues to monitor these issues closely, in particular the challenges faced by those who own and live in flats within the existing stock of high rise residential buildings around Wales.

### Other work

**45.** There are two inquiries which we had identified that we would like to undertake in this Senedd, but we have been unable to do. We believe that both of these are very important, and that a successor committee should consider these in more detail.

### Community Cohesion / Integration

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**46.** During the Senedd term and particularly before the global pandemic hit, we were concerned at some of the reports suggesting that community cohesion had been affected by the wider political events, such as the referendum on EU membership. It was an issue we touched upon as part of our work looking at refugees and asylum seekers in Wales, and felt merited further investigation. Throughout this Senedd we have called for the Welsh Government to update its community cohesion delivery plan, which it had committed to doing twice before, in both 2017 and 2018. While we welcome on-going work to update the Race Equality Action Plan, we still believe the broader area of community cohesion and integration should be a matter of high priority for the next Senedd.

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<sup>15</sup> [Letter from the Minister for Housing and Local Government in relation to the inquiry into fire safety in high rise blocks in Wales. 16 March 2021](#)

**47.** Unfortunately as the pandemic hit, we had to reshape our work programme, and were unable to undertake this work.

## Second Homes

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**48.** In 2018, we identified two housing related inquiries to undertake; empty properties, and second homes. We completed the empty properties work, but our legislative commitments meant we were unable to look at the issue of second homes.

**49.** While there are particular “hotspots” that this issue affects more acutely, we are aware that this has an impact on the available housing stock in many areas, and has wider consequences on communities and individuals. We therefore believe there is merit in further work on this in the next Senedd.

## Other areas of interest

### Post legislative scrutiny

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**50.** There are also a range of other areas which we feel are important, and future committees may wish to consider. In particular, we feel that there is real benefit for committees in the Sixth Senedd to undertake more post-legislative scrutiny. This was our approach in our first substantive inquiry – on the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015<sup>16</sup>, work we continued to follow up throughout the Senedd term.

**51.** Post legislative scrutiny is an important, if sometimes, overlooked area of scrutiny. There are a number of areas of work which we feel would benefit it. In particular, there have been a number of significant pieces of housing legislation:

- Housing (Wales) Act 2014 – in particular landlord and agent registration and licensing scheme;
- Impact of the Abolition of Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018.
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – in particular looking at Parts 2 (Public Participation in local democracy); 4 (Local Authority

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<sup>16</sup> [ELGC Committee, Is the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015 working? December 2016](#)

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Executives, members and officers); 5 (Corporate Joint Committees) and Part 6 (Performance and Governance).

**52.** A future Committee may also wish to review the implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. This legislation has not yet been commenced, despite being passed five years ago. During the course of this Senedd, we have considered two further Acts which amended the 2016 Act. Consideration of implementation of the 2016 legislation, should also consider the changes introduced by these two Acts, in relation to the ban of letting agent fees; and the introduction of longer no-fault notice periods.

### Policy scrutiny

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**53.** There are also a range of other issues which we feel could benefit from further scrutiny in the Sixth Senedd:

- Alternative models of service delivery in local government;
- Transformation agenda in local government – digital;
- Post-pandemic recovery - local government services;
- Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Gender Equality Review;
- Regional economic inequalities and ‘left-behind’ communities. This should encompass the industrial communities and the particular challenges faced in terms of social mobility in communities which have experienced a long-term reduction in education and employment opportunities;
- Poverty – Local delivery of anti-poverty programmes in a post Communities First Wales;
- Reducing sexual harassment/increasing safety of women; and
- Availability of all-weather play areas for children and young people.