

# Votes and Proceedings – Plenary

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Meeting Venue:

Y Siambr – Y Senedd

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Meeting time: 13.30

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/13711>

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This meeting was held in a hybrid format, with some Members in the Senedd Chamber and others joining by video-conference.

### 1 Questions to the Minister for Economy

The item started at 13.30

The first 8 questions were asked. Questions 2 and 3 were answered by the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism. The Presiding Officer invited party spokespeople to ask questions to the Minister after question 2.

### 2 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

The item started at 14.27

The first 8 questions were asked. Questions 2, 4 and 5 were answered by the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Presiding Officer invited party spokespeople to ask questions to the Minister after question 2.

At 15.18, Tom Giffard raised a Point of Order to seek to correct remarks made by Mabon ap Gwynfor regarding meetings of the Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee during Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services. Mabon ap Gwynfor accepted the correction.



### 3 Topical Questions

The item started at 15.18

#### **Answered by Minister for Education and Welsh Language**

[Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#): What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the effect of increasing tuition fee caps and cutting postgraduate support grants on the probable number of students applying to study in Welsh Universities?

#### **Answered by the Minister for Finance and Local Government**

[Peredur Owen Griffiths \(South Wales East\)](#): What consultation has the Minister held with local authorities across Wales before the Welsh Government allocates consequential funding to local authorities in Wales following the UK Government's announcement in January 2024?

### 4 90 Second Statements

The item started at 15.44

**Adam Price** made a statement on – Tribute to Barry John.

**Darren Miller** made a statement on – Welsh Dark Skies Week (9–18 February).

**Mike Hedges** made a statement on – Leukaemia, one of the less discussed cancers – World Cancer Day (4 February).

### 5 Debate on the Local Government and Housing Committee report – Diversity in Local Government

The item started at 15.49

**NDM8477** [John Griffiths \(Newport East\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

Notes the report of the Local Government and Housing Committee, 'Diversity in Local Government', which was [laid](#) in the Table Office on 17 October 2023.

Note: The response of the Welsh Government to the report was [laid](#) in the Table Office on 31 January 2024.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

## 6 Welsh Conservatives Debate – Housing supply

The item started at 16.29

**Voting on the motion and amendments under this item was deferred until Voting Time.**

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

**NDM8479** [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Regrets that despite Wales needing at least 12,000 new homes every year, over the last decade the Welsh Government has barely built half that number.
2. Recognises figures released from the Office for National Statistics in 2023 that there are 103,000 truly vacant unoccupied dwellings in Wales.
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to:
  - a) establish a dedicated taskforce of planners to tackle the backlog in the slowest performing councils, and create a planning apprentice for every council;
  - b) support small developers in Wales to build homes on land owned by the Welsh Government and local councils, with a focus on meeting local housing needs; and

c) turn Wales's empty properties back into homes.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
14	0	37	51

The motion without amendment not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

**Amendment 1** [Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#)

Delete all and replace with:

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes:

a) that almost 90,000 households are on social housing waiting lists at present; and

b) that 11,273 individuals were in temporary accommodation, of which 3,403 were dependent children aged under 16 in October 2023.

2. Regrets:

a) that the Welsh Government has only delivered 5,775 units since 2021, despite the target to deliver 20,000 new low carbon homes for rent within the social sector during this government term; and

b) that over 139,000 social homes on rent had been lost to the open market, by the time the Right to Buy was abolished in Wales in 2019, contributing greatly to the current housing crisis.

3. Believes:

a) the solution to Wales’s housing crisis lies in increasing the supply of affordable homes for medium– and low–income households, for rent and for purchase; and

b) that securing a much higher rate of homes in public and community ownership will also positively influence affordability in the wider housing market.

4. Welcomes:

a) the Co–operation Agreement commitment to publish a White Paper setting out proposals to establish a system of fair rents and new approaches to make homes more affordable; and

b) radical reform for the future set out in the White Paper on Ending Homelessness developed as part of the Co–operation Agreement.

5. Calls on the Welsh Government to rapidly accelerate the construction of social housing in order to meet or exceed the target to deliver 20,000 new low carbon homes for rent within the social sector.

A vote was taken on amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
12	0	40	52

**Amendment 1 was not agreed.**

**Amendment 2 [Lesley Griffiths \(Wrexham\)](#)**

Delete all and replace with:

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Acknowledges the challenges being faced by the housing sector, which are impacting housing supply across the United Kingdom.

2. Welcomes the action and investment being made in housing by the Welsh Government.

3. Notes the Welsh Government's ambitious commitment to deliver 20,000 low carbon, social homes during this term of Government.

4. Notes the Welsh Government's commitment to Unnos, together with Plaid Cymru, to support our councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing, including bringing more empty homes back into use.

A vote was taken on amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
37	0	15	52

**Amendment 2 was agreed.**

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

**NDM8479 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)**

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Acknowledges the challenges being faced by the housing sector, which are impacting housing supply across the United Kingdom.

2. Welcomes the action and investment being made in housing by the Welsh Government.

3. Notes the Welsh Government's ambitious commitment to deliver 20,000 low carbon, social homes during this term of Government.

4. Notes the Welsh Government's commitment to Unnos, together with Plaid Cymru, to support our councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing, including bringing more empty homes back into use.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
37	0	15	52

The motion as amended was agreed.

## 7 Plaid Cymru Debate – The health service

The item started at 17.33

Voting on the motion and amendments under this item was deferred until Voting Time.

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

### NDM8478 [Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Supports the heroic efforts of NHS staff in Wales as they provide care in challenging circumstances.
2. Notes the first anniversary of the Minister for Health and Social Services setting out the Welsh Government's priorities for the NHS in Wales.
3. Believes that:
  - a) health outcomes have worsened in the past year; and
  - b) a failure to act on the priorities has contributed to all health boards being in some form of escalation status.

4. Regrets that:

a) the number of patient pathways waiting for treatment was 758,815 in November 2023, compared to 731,102 in February 2023;

b) 53.5 per cent of patients started their first definitive treatment within the target of 62 days of first being suspected of cancer in November 2023 , compared to 54.3 per cent in February 2023;

c) the full time equivalent number of GPs in Wales was 1901 in 2013 and 1429.6 in 2023; and

d) 66.7 per cent of patients spent less than 4 hours in A&E in December 2023, compared to 71.5 per cent in February 2023.

5. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

a) set out a clear timescale to de-escalate intervention arrangements in every health board; and

b) declare a health emergency.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
26	0	27	53

As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Presiding Officer exercised her casting vote by voting against the motion without amendment. Therefore, the motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 [Lesley Griffiths \(Wrexham\)](#)

Delete all after point 2 and replace with:



Notes that:

- a) at the end of November 2023, the percentage of open pathways waiting less than 104 weeks was 96.7%, which is 20th successive improvement and the highest it has been since August 2021;
- b) in 2023, the average number of people referred onto the suspected cancer pathway per month has increased by 53% since 2020;
- c) in November 2023, nearly 14,800 people who were referred for suspected cancer were informed they did not have cancer, the second highest on record;
- d) there were more fully-qualified GPs working in Wales in June 2023 compared with the year before – an increase of 0.9%; and
- e) latest available data for December 2023 show a 51% reduction in average ambulance response time performance for amber calls, 29% improvement in ambulance patient handover performance and a 20% reduction in patients spending over 12 hours in emergency departments before admission or discharge; when compared with the same month in 2022.

A vote was taken on amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
26	0	27	53

As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Presiding Officer exercised her casting vote by voting against the amendment. Therefore, the amendment was not agreed.

**Amendment 2** [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 5:

develop and deliver a workforce plan for the Welsh NHS;

A vote was taken on amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
26	0	27	53

As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Presiding Officer exercised her casting vote by voting against the amendment. Therefore, the amendment was not agreed.

**Amendment 3** [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 5:

set a target to eliminate two-year waits by September 2024 and create a taskforce to deliver it;

A vote was taken on amendment 3:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
27	0	25	53

**Amendment 3 was agreed.**

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

**NDM8478** [Heledd Fychan \(South Wales Central\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Supports the heroic efforts of NHS staff in Wales as they provide care in challenging circumstances.
2. Notes the first anniversary of the Minister for Health and Social Services setting out the Welsh Government's priorities for the NHS in Wales.

3. Believes that:

a) health outcomes have worsened in the past year; and

b) a failure to act on the priorities has contributed to all health boards being in some form of escalation status.

4. Regrets that:

a) the number of patient pathways waiting for treatment was 758,815 in November 2023, compared to 731,102 in February 2023;

b) 53.5 per cent of patients started their first definitive treatment within the target of 62 days of first being suspected of cancer in November 2023 , compared to 54.3 per cent in February 2023;

c) the full time equivalent number of GPs in Wales was 1901 in 2013 and 1429.6 in 2023; and

d) 66.7 per cent of patients spent less than 4 hours in A&E in December 2023, compared to 71.5 per cent in February 2023.

5. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

a) set out a clear timescale to de-escalate intervention arrangements in every health board;

b) declare a health emergency; and

c) set a target to eliminate two-year waits by September 2024 and create a taskforce to deliver it.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
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26	0	27	53
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As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Presiding Officer exercised her casting vote by voting against the motion as amended. Therefore, the motion as amended was not agreed.

## 8 Voting Time

The item started at 18.40

## 9 Short Debate

The item started at 18.46

**NDM8476** [Janet Finch-Saunders \(Aberconwy\)](#)

Faster access to hearing services in Wales

The meeting concluded at 19.09

**The Senedd will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Tuesday, 20 February 2024**