

The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Gorffennaf 2021
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Petition title: The Welsh Government to put in place a dedicated disability Minister within the next term of Government

Text of petition:

With one in five people here in Wales living with a disability according to ONS. It has never been more important for Wales to become a truly inclusive nation for all its citizens. We want Wales to become the first devolved nation to have its own dedicated disability Minister. With a dedicated minister focusing on disability we can make bigger strides towards, a fairer employment system, more opportunities for disabled students and greater support for mental health.



1. Background

The First Minister **announced** his new Cabinet on 13 May 2021. No specific disability minister was appointed. Responsibility for disability strategy and policy rests with the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt, MS as part of her responsibilities for Equality and Human Rights.

The Scottish Government has a **Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government** who has similar responsibilities to the Welsh Government's Minister for Social Justice. However, there is also a **Minister for Equalities and Older People** who also has disability within their remit.

The UK Government has a **Minister of State for disabled people** who sits within the department for work and pensions. Their remit includes cross-government support for disabled people, departmental strategy for disabled people, disability allowances reform, work and health strategy for disabled people in the department for work and pensions and department for health and social care.

The Northern Ireland Executive currently has a **Department for Communities** which includes responsibility for supporting disability issues.

There are examples of other countries around the world who have ministers or cabinet members with specific responsibility for disability issues. For example the New Zealand Government has **an office for disability issues** and a minister for disability issues. The Irish Government has **a Minister of State with responsibility for disability issues** across two departments, the department for health and the department for children, equality, disability, integration and youth.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has a **Disability Equality Forum** made up of stakeholders who advise the Welsh Government on disability issues. In **a statement** in December 2020, the then Deputy First Minister, Jane Hutt MS, stated that she had chaired a meeting of the group six times since the start of the pandemic.

3. Welsh Parliament Action

Whilst disability issues have been discussed frequently in the Welsh Parliament there have been no specific debates on the issue of the appointment of a disability Minister.

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