

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS  
Chair  
Finance Committee

28 April 2023

Dear Peredur

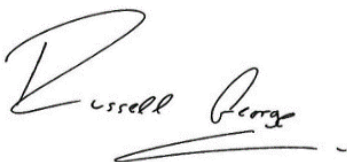
### Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2023-24: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2023, and the opportunity to comment on the budget documentation provided by the Welsh Government to inform the Senedd's scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2023-24.

We discussed your letter at our meeting on 30 March 2023, and hope that the reflections on our experience of scrutinising the Welsh Government's draft budget 2023-24 set out in the annex to this letter will be of assistance in driving forward improvements for future years.

Please let us know if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

# **Annex: views of the Health and Social Care Committee on the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2023-24 documentation and subsequent Ministerial written evidence**

## Background

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**1.** The Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget 2023-24 took place on 11 January 2023. In line with our usual practice, we wrote to the Ministers with responsibility for health and social care on 28 October 2022, requesting written information to inform our scrutiny. The deadline for submission was 14 December 2022. We received the final documentation in English on 21 December 2022. The Welsh documentation was not received until 9 January 2023 (our meeting papers had been published on 6 January 2023). In addition, on 9 January 2023, we received a request to replace part of the original English submission (which had already been published) with a revised version.

## Timeliness of evidence

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**2.** Papers need to be received bilingually when requested with all the relevant attachments. They should also be accurate and not need to be replaced by updated or amended versions. Receiving evidence a week late, and only just before the Christmas break, reduced the time available for Members and our officials to consider the evidence and prepare for the oral evidence session with the Ministers.

## Focus of evidence

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**3.** The Committee would like to see the Welsh Government give us the top line, key messages; how the allocations reflect those messages; the outcomes they expect to see and how they will measure those outcomes. While we had written to the Welsh Government in advance to identify some issues, the written evidence was very long and lacked specifics.

**4.** In future, we would want a summary of key headline messages, key and significant changes (e.g. health board inflation increases, increase in social care funding), key pressures, key new objectives or priorities, and changes from the previous year. The main body should be well-edited and focused. It should show precisely what is being spent, in what areas, the timeline for the spend, and what impact/output will be secured for that spend. For capital schemes, it should be specific about what schemes are being funded, and what will be bought and by when. Evidence this year, and in previous years, has lacked granular detail.

**5.** A significant proportion of health funding is given directly to health boards. The Committee needs to receive information about the Ministers' priorities and any directions relating to this funding at a far earlier stage. We can see no reason why we should not receive this at the same as health boards, and at the very least well in advance of any oral evidence sessions.

**6.** The Welsh Government needs to be clearer in its budget narrative and documentation about how spending in other DELs contributes to tackling health inequalities. This should be clear in terms of messaging, and in terms of identified money, outcomes and measures.

**7.** This is also the case in relation to preventative spend.

Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report

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**8.** The Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report needs to be received further in advance of the Plenary debate to enable Members and stakeholders to consider it before taking part in the debate and vote on the budget. This year, we received the English version the evening before the debate, and the Welsh version and a covering letter just hours before the debate took place.

Information about the final budget

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**9.** When the final budget is laid, it should be accompanied by clear information about what has changed from the draft budget. Ministers should write to Committees that have undertaken budget scrutiny, either to confirm the draft budget allocations are reflected in the final budget, or to identify where there have been changes.