



Ein cyf/Our ref: SPC 02-03

8 July 2024

Dear SPC members,

I am grateful for the positive discussion we had on the review of our well-being objectives at the Social Partnership Council in June and for the further written submission from the trade union members.

The well-being objectives are those areas that we believe will maximise our contribution to the well-being goals. They should be viewed alongside the commitments (steps) that are set out alongside them in the Programme for Government, and as a set that collectively reinforce each other, for example in their expectation that equality is always a consideration. They are also only one part of the social partnership duty on Ministers and the comments made will inform our actions in other areas, as well as being matters that we return to, for example round the budget which within the parameters of funding available will give us a chance to discuss prioritisation to best make progress towards delivery of our well-being objectives.

In this the first year of the social partnership duty, we recognised that we would not be able to have as complete a discussion as we would like to have, with the SPC only having its first opportunity to discuss the wellbeing objectives in June and the annual report needing to be published in July. Nevertheless, it was our intention to consult you on the review of these well-being objectives so your views could influence strategic decisions at the heart of government. The feedback you provided identified a range of ways to take elements of it forward.

At the SPC we agreed that Fair Work must be at the heart of what we do. Fair work is central to our values and is represented in the current well-being objectives and corresponding steps across the Programme for Government. I have discussed your feedback with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Cabinet Office who has agreed to consider this, and other areas of the feedback, in work she is leading on medium to longer term thinking through a new approach to the Welsh Spending Review. I also look forward to working with the new UK Government and trade unions on implementing the new

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

deal for working people to deliver a genuine living wage; ban exploitative zero-hour contracts; end fire and rehire; and guarantee basic rights at work from day one. Cabinet is currently looking at its top priorities for the remaining two years of this Senedd. They will focus on areas you raised in your feedback - health, homes, education, a greener economy and transport – and what more we can do to support the workforce to deliver accelerated progress.

The NHS is a treasured public service to this government. We have made different choices than in England because, like you, we believe it should remain in the public sector, with a public sector workforce, free at the point of need. Even in the most challenging of financial times we have protected our principles, which the First Minister will reaffirm in the government debate in July.

The importance of post compulsory education was rightly raised in our SPC. The very first law passed in this Senedd term was the Tertiary Education and Research Act. I am pleased to confirm that from August the Commission (known as Medr) will be fully operational. This will be the first-time that post-16 education will be coordinated by one body, enabling it to take a whole system approach to improving quality and learner experience.

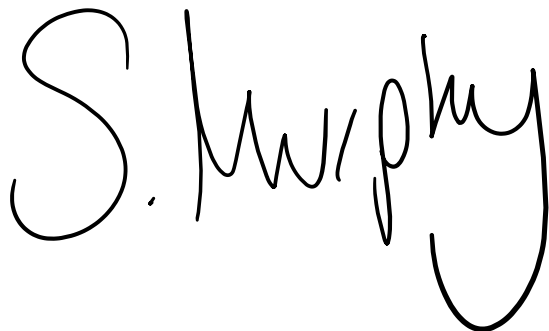
With regards to education more generally, members of the Council made the point that our focus must be on consolidation and implementation. Likewise, the Education Secretary has been absolutely clear that her focus is not on the introduction of wholesale changes, but rather to support the profession with implementation of the existing programme of reform. The Welsh Government is committed to an ambitious reform of children's care services. We do not believe that private profit should be made from caring for children and young people whose circumstances require them to be in the care of a local authority. I am proud that we have recently published our Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill which will remove private profit from the care of looked after children. This is excellent progress. While we recognise the points made by the TUC, we must be realistic about whether we can go further in areas such as the National Care Service or eliminating private profit from care in the context of our funding being £700m less, in real terms, than when we undertook the Spending Review in 2021. Both these areas are represented in the current commitments (steps) set out under the well-being objectives.

In relation to disabled people, the Welsh Government is committed to the social model of disability, and this is reflected in the Programme for Government commitment on the Disabled Peoples Employment Champions and work to close the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working population. Moreover, we have established a Disability Rights Taskforce to make recommendations on removing inequalities experienced by disabled people in society.

We continue to be committed to tackling poverty and mitigating its devastating impacts. We also remain resolute in our ambition to meet net zero by 2050 and to do this through a just transition. Many of the steps that support the well-being objectives are designed to support these ambitions. However, we know that more can be done, even within the current financial constraints, if we improve the way we join up across government. Cabinet has identified addressing poverty and climate change as their collective priority themes for the next two years. The First Minister has embedded a new and innovative approach through the new Cross-government Delivery Cabinet Sub Committee that will sit in dedicated and regular session to drive delivery in both areas. The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice will chair the sessions on poverty and the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs those on climate action and nature restoration, with a just transition central to its work. These arrangements will commence in the autumn term.

In their discussion, Cabinet concluded that they would retain the existing well-being objectives for the year 24/25 recognising that the input from the SPC was a valuable input into broader considerations on delivery moving forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. Murphy'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

Sarah Murphy AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol
Minister for Social Partnership