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Assembly Member for Swansea West

STANDING UP
FOR WALES

Welsh Labour  Llafur Cymru



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Wales



This month I have announced a number of items as the Minister for Housing and Local Government, including a consultation on increasing the notice period for a no-fault eviction - publishing the Welsh Government response to the Independent Affordable Housing Supply Review, and announcing the Welsh Governments commitment to the fair work agenda.

Yesterday (Thursday 18th) the report on the decarbonisation of homes was released - a very important report which explores the way Wales can bring its entire housing stock to a better environmental standard by working to make all houses carbon neutral.

This month at the Senedd I took part in the Great Get Together, inspired by Jo Cox. As politics becomes more and more divided, it is important to remember Jo's words as part of her inaugural speech to Parliament: 'We have far more in common than that which divides us'. We should all be working to bring communities together, and ensure that we can all coexist peacefully in our vibrant, multicultural society.

There have also been lots of great things happening in Swansea West including our Breast Cancer Care Afternoon Tea and lots of meetings. We raised £250, many thanks to those who donated and congratulations to our prize winners!

This month will be another packed month—tomorrow (Saturday 20th), you can join me and my team at the Waunarlwydd Carnival, I will be meeting with Associated British Ports, visiting a Veterans Group in Townhill, meeting with the vice chancellor elect of Swansea University plus much more!

Constituency News

This month has been very busy in the constituency with a number of events that I was happy to support and privileged to be asked to speak at. If anyone knows of events that could benefit from some extra publicity or support, please get in touch.

School Uniform Grant

You could be eligible to receive up to £200 to buy school uniform, equipment, sports kit and kit for activities outside of school for your child.

The Welsh Government fund, which has doubled to over £5 million this year, supports families with the costs of school uniform and sports kit, and equipment for activities both inside and outside of school.

The grant is central to the Welsh Government's commitment to remove barriers to learning and ensure equity and excellence for all children and young people.

Read More <https://bit.ly/2YvVEDL>

Armed Forces Day

It was shameful this month that Swansea's war memorial was defaced - right before Armed Forces Day. I'm glad Swansea Council cleaned it so quickly. No matter what your position is on war, disrespect for those who have served is unacceptable. I was happy to support Armed Forces Day again this year to show support for veterans.





Freedom Music

This month I was very proud to be able to present our First Minister with Jen Wilson's newly published book, Freedom Music. Jen runs Jazz Heritage Wales - Treftadaeth Jazz Cymru in Swansea as part of University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Breast Cancer Care Afternoon Tea

We had a fantastic time in the Marriott hotel raising money for Breast Cancer Care. Plenty of tea, coffee, sandwiches and cake to go with our raffles and competitions! Congratulations to our fabulous prize winners. We raised over £250 in total from the afternoon.



FareShare Cymru is coming to Swansea

FareShare Cymru has asked me to let as many people as possible know that they are expanding to Swansea. If your organisation uses food or if you want to save money on your food bills then FareShare Cymru may be able to help.

FareShare Cymru is a registered food redistribution charity based in Cardiff, operating throughout South Wales. They secure good quality surplus food and drink from the food industry. They redistribute good food that would otherwise go to waste to frontline charities and community groups supporting vulnerable people, providing them with a value for money option for their supply food and drink. This may be for their kitchens, the kitchens used by residents, cooking classes, food parcels, breakfast clubs, after school clubs etc.

“FareShare has been invaluable to our daily luncheon club that we run here ... They have helped not only financially but have also enabled us to pass food products on to isolated people in our community. The quality of the produce we receive is fantastic!” Moorland Road Community Centre

They say that food becomes surplus for a whole range of reasons from packaging errors to short date coding or cosmetic imperfections. But all the food they provide is within its use by or best before date and follows stringent policies and procedures for storage and transportation to meet all food safety legislation.

From marvellous meat, dairy and fish to flavoursome fruit and veg, the food they save is good quality, in date and could help you provide a healthy varied menu for the people you support.

“The variety of food allows the chefs to be creative and gives the residents choice and variation. Our canteen can be packed, it brings our residents and staff together. It’s so good to see

that additional food is not going to waste, but more importantly going to people that actually need it.” Ty Gobaith

They already work with a huge range of charities and community organisations including hostels for the homeless, women's refuges, refugee centres, youth groups, community centres, community cafes, lunch clubs, churches, school holiday clubs, community pantry's and many more. If what you do isn't on the list—give them a call and ask if they can help you. If you are using food regularly for social good, they will be interested.

“The food from FareShare gives people more variety and is cost effective. With not a lot of money, we can cook people a healthy lunch”. Oasis

They are now inviting organisations in Swansea to express an interest in becoming a Community Food Members.

If your organisation or project supports vulnerable people in your community and you are a charity, not-for-profit organisation, community group or a social enterprise providing a meal or food service, please get in touch to find out more.

Email: enquiries@fareshare.cymru

Phone: 02920 362111 – ask for Sarah or Katie

Write to: Unit S5, Capital Business Park, Cardiff CF3 2PU



Julie James AM Jobs Fair

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National Waterfront Museum
20th September 11am - 2pm

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Julie James AM



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JULIE JAMES ASSEMBLY MEMBER AELOD CYNULLIAD

**I want to wish Swansea
International Jazz Festival another
successful event this year!**

**Yn dymuno digwyddiad
llwyddiannus arall Gwyl Jazz
Ryngwladol Abertawe eleni!**



**CALL 01792 460 836
FOR AN APPOINTMENT
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SWANSEA SA1 1DP**

**FFONIWCH 01792 460 836
I WNEUD APWYNTIAD
LLAWR 1AF
11 STRYD Y GWYNT
ABERTAWE SA1 1DP**

**JULIE.JAMES@ASSEMBLY.WALES
JULIEJAMESAM.CO.UK**

Senedd News

Rise in GP satisfaction levels according to latest National Survey results

People in Wales are more satisfied with the quality of GP care and education, but are increasingly concerned about climate change, according to the latest results from the National Survey.

The National Survey for Wales is a face-to-face survey of 12,000 people across Wales. The study gathers information on many topics including health, schools, sports, art and culture. The 2018-19 survey also included a number of new questions on environmental issues and the Welsh language.

Results are used by the Welsh Government and other organisations across Wales to help inform decision and policy making.

Key results from the National Survey in 2018-19 include:

83% of people in Wales are highly or very highly satisfied with their lives

93% of people surveyed are satisfied with their GP care (+7% from last year) and 93% (+3%) are satisfied with the care they received at their last NHS hospital appointment

93% of people think the world's climate is changing. Of these, 37% were very concerned.

90% of parents are satisfied with their child's primary school and 81% with their child's secondary school

43% of Welsh speakers learned Welsh at school

84% are satisfied with their local green space

80% are satisfied with their local authority recycling service

<https://bit.ly/2FTyIHg>

Consultation about increasing the notice period for a no-fault eviction (Senedd, 11th July 2019)

The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 is key to making renting a positive choice and achieving security of tenure. However, its implementation has been delayed due to the reform of court IT systems in England and Wales.

We are now in a position where we are able to proceed with implementation of this important Act. In doing so, we will honour our commitment to give six months' notice ahead of the Act coming into force so landlords, agents and licensees and tenants – who will be known as contract-holders under the Act – have time to prepare for the changes.

The Act provides a new, streamlined and reformed basis for residential letting in Wales, with significant benefits for anyone who rents their home. These include mandatory written contracts, clearly setting out all the relevant rights and responsibilities of landlords and contract-holders; Arrangements for joint contracts, which will stop one joint contract-holder acting alone to end the contract, helping to prevent unintentional homelessness; Protection against retaliatory evictions – when a landlord evicts a tenant in response to a request for repairs or maintenance; The introduction of a Fitness for Human Habitation standard for all privately rented properties, including regulations setting out requirements for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and electrical safety testing.

However, there is more we can do, in particular to address widely held concerns about the use of no fault evictions. Section 173 of the Act, as currently drafted, allows a property owner to seek possession of a property without a breach of contract occurring with two months' notice.

I have launched a consultation asking for views about amending the Renting Homes Act before it comes into force. Under

the consultation are main proposals for periodic contracts (those contracts with no end-date):

Extending the minimum notice period applicable to a section 173 notice from two to six months; Restricting a landlord from serving a section 173 notice within the first six months of a periodic contract, rather than four months as currently provided for and placing a six-month restriction on issuing a section 173 notice following the expiry of a previous notice.

The main proposals for fixed-term contracts (those contracts with a pre-agreed end-date) are: Removal of a landlord's ability to end a fixed term standard contract under section 186 and to consider the use of break clauses in fixed term contracts.

We are also seeking views about other proposals intended to complement those outlined above, including Restrictions on issuing possession notices to landlords which the courts have found to have carried out retaliatory eviction and restrictions on issuing possession notices to property owners in breach of other laws related to rented housing, such as not having an Energy Performance Certificate or a valid gas safety certificate.

I believe these proposals will improve security of tenure for everyone renting in Wales, including those who rent from social property owners, which may also use no fault notices in certain situations.

There are legitimate reasons why a property owner may need possession of their property, such as to live in it themselves. Getting the balance right is vital if we are to maintain and encourage a vibrant private rented sector that provides high quality homes.

The consultation document and questions can be found at <https://gov.wales/increasing-minimum-notice-period-no-fault-eviction> and the consultation will close on 5 September.

Go Green Day

I took part in Go Green Day by pledging to cut my carbon footprint by using refillable cups and bottles whenever I can - Size of Wales holds Go Green Day on Wales' annual Day of Green #ClimateAction Friday 21st June . Find out more at sizeofwales.org.uk/gogreenday



National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

This month the NRAS came to the Pierhead, and unfortunately although I was unavailable I was happy to send my staff to attend. NRAS are calling for a paediatric rheumatology service to be established in South Wales and more awareness to combat misconceptions surrounding Rheumatoid Arthritis, such as the idea that it only affects those who are older.



Scams Awareness Campaign



I'm supporting [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)'s 2019 Scams Awareness campaign and advising everyone to 'stop, report, talk' if they think they're being targeted by scams or fraud. Scams can affect anyone so make sure you are [#scamaware](https://twitter.com/scamaware).

More Info <https://bit.ly/2EqhCOD>

HMRC Scam

I'd like to ask everyone to spread the word that that fraudsters have been calling people while pretending to be from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and spoofing National Assembly for Wales numbers. Our office has been targeted and so if someone calls from our Cardiff based number pretending to be HMRC, please ignore the call.

Please see the below advice.

- Forward details of suspicious calls and emails to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599, or contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. Use their online fraud reporting tool if you suffer financial loss.
- HMRC will only ever call asking for payment on a debt that you are already aware of, having received a letter about it, or after you've told the department you owe tax, possibly through a Self-Assessment return.
- If in doubt, check the number and end the call. You can contact HMRC using one of the helpline numbers or online services available from GOV.UK.
- Genuine organisations like banks and HMRC will never contact you out of the blue to ask for your PIN, password or bank details.
- Don't give out private information, reply to text messages, download attachments or click on links in emails you weren't expecting.

New controls deployed by HMRC mean fraudsters can no longer spoof most of the department's helpline numbers. Scammers mimic legitimate HMRC helpline numbers to dupe taxpayers and steal their money and personal information. These new controls may mean scammers are looking for other numbers to mimic in order to make their calls seem genuine.

Independent Affordable Housing Supply (Senedd, 9th July)

On 1 May I received the final report from the Affordable Housing Supply Review. The review made a number of recommendations about how we can ensure we are maximising the number of affordable homes we deliver in Wales, whilst not compromising on energy efficiency, quality or affordability for tenants. The independent panel, chaired by Lynn Pamment, spent a significant amount of time looking at all aspects of affordable housing supply and today I am very pleased to share the government's initial response to their recommendations with you. This is the first of what will be a series of responses, to reviews and consultations that are due to report over the coming months. I will have more to say in due course on Decarbonisation, Planning matters and Building Regulations. I am acutely aware of the need for the policies in all of these areas to be closely aligned.

I am pleased to say that we have accepted or accepted in principle every recommendation in the report, with one exception in respect of the future of Help to Buy. We are not in a position to respond until the autumn when we are aware of the consequential funding we will receive from the UK Government. It is not my intention to go through each and every recommendation today. I do, however, want to offer my comments on some of the key findings.

The panel highlighted the importance of understanding housing need, and some of the challenges local authorities face in this area. They highlighted the strong role Welsh Government could and should play, and the importance of strengthening the links between housing need and the planning process. I accept this critique and welcome their support for the work we have done on assessing need at a national and regional level. Their suggestion that this work should now be extended to a local level is one I support and intend to pursue.

I know that the setting of rent policy was one of the most challenging and contentious aspects of the Review, with strong and conflicting views expressed from different parts of the sector. I agree with the Review panel that there is a continuing need for a rent policy to provide certainty for tenants and landlords; and

that landlords should be considering value for money and efficiencies to justify rent increases. As a result, prior to the summer recess I will be announcing what the five year rent policy will be once I have received all of the necessary data. I will ensure my decision balances the need for landlords to have certainty about the rental income they can expect, together with affordability secured for tenants.

One of the key ways in which we can increase the supply of social housing is through local authorities getting back to building council houses at pace and scale. The long-overdue lifting of the borrowing cap will be an important catalyst for this, as will access to grants from Welsh Government, as the Review panel recommend. Where appropriate I am prepared to make grant available to ambitious authorities, to be used alongside the flexibilities the lifting of the borrowing cap creates. Clearly the fine detail of this arrangement is something I will wish to agree with the WLGA. This is a huge opportunity to build more affordable homes over the next decade and beyond.

We need to be far more sophisticated in the way we use public land to support a wider range of objectives than simply generating the highest capital receipt, I want to see stronger joint working across organisations to help achieve this. Along with my colleagues the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd and the Minister for Economy and Transport this is a matter on which I will have more to say over the coming months.

I absolutely accept the need to move quickly towards zero carbon homes, in both the affordable and market sectors. Moving towards zero carbon is a priority for this government. We will work with housing associations and local authorities in Wales to determine whether we can achieve the 2021 target proposed in the Review.

I recognise the need for change, and that we must strive to get more from existing resource. But we must not do this at the expense of the good quality homes people need, if we are to build communities we can be proud of. This is an opportunity to change the way we deliver the homes we need. There is a real need for social housing in Wales and this is the time to increase the pace and scale of delivery.

Coming Up

- **Tomorrow—Join me & my team at Waunarlwydd Carnival**
- **8th August meeting with Associated British Ports**
- **8th August—visiting Veterans Group in Townhill**
- **9th August—meeting with vice chancellor elect Swansea University**
- **12th August meeting with CE and Leader of Swansea Council**
- **13th August visiting Dementia Bar & Tearooms at Cefn Coed Hospital**

Get in touch...

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I want to hear from you!

If you think that I should be involved in any event, organisation or debate then please get in touch, I really would like to hear from you. My details are above so please get in touch.