

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y  
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Scrutiny  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00434/25

Chair  
Bridgend Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Bridgend County Borough Council

[scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk)

30 May 2025

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language outlining Bridgend Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerns about residents not claiming their financial entitlements. As Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for tackling poverty, I have been asked to respond.

Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that people across Wales claim every pound they are entitled to and are undertaking a range of income maximisation projects. Our Single Advice Fund services and Claim What's Yours national benefit take-up campaign have proven extremely successful in assisting people to maximise their income. During the period January 2020 to March 2025 these projects have helped people to claim additional income of over £208 million.

I agree with the potential benefits of auto-enrolment; and whilst I appreciate there are a raft of considerations in terms of legislation, data sharing and ensuring there are no unintended negative consequences for individuals, all of these are being explored within our collaborative programme of work with Welsh local authorities to make the Welsh Benefits as easy to claim as they possibly can be. A Steering [Group](#) is driving this work forward and I am grateful for the support from Bridgend Council's Head of Revenues and Benefits, who is a valued member of the Steering Group.

In recognition of the complexity of the work a phased approach has been adopted and the Steering Group's [Phase One Route Map](#) was published in February. This sets out the actions needed to ensure that all local authorities are delivering three key benefits (Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Free School Meals and Schools Essentials Grant) seamlessly and residents are able to access all three by providing their evidence only once. The aim is to achieve this by April 2026 and then we will start to incorporate the other Welsh Benefits.

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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.

We are also exploring the effectiveness of data analysis as an income maximisation approach and are funding a pilot where twelve local authorities, including Bridgend, are working with the data analytical company Policy in Practice to use their Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to identify residents who are missing out on their financial entitlements. A full evaluation of the pilot will be undertaken which will provide valuable learning for our work to streamline the delivery of the Welsh benefits, particularly around data governance.

Regular updates on this work are provided to the Partnership Council for Wales where the Welsh Benefits Charter and approach to the Streamlining of Welsh Benefits programme was formally endorsed by all members.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'H'.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

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