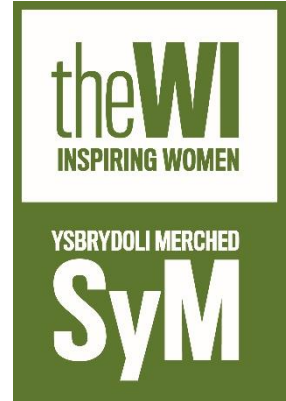


8 March 2023

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Chair
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Senedd
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Ffederasiwn Cenedlaethol
Sefydliad y Merched
Ystafell 66,
33 Heol yr Eglwys Gadeiriol,
Caerdydd CF11 9HB
T: +44 29 2022 1712

NFWI Wales Office
Suite 66, 33 Cathedral Road,
Cardiff CF11 9HB
walesoffice@nfwl-wales.org.uk



Annwyl Llyr Gruffydd AS

Further to the recent announcement by the Welsh Government that the Bus Emergency Scheme will end in June, I am contacting you regarding our concerns about the potential impact of this decision on bus services across Wales, in particular services in rural communities.

Bus services play a vital role in ensuring communities remain sustainable, reduce social isolation and ensure access to employment, education, local facilities and health services. Cuts to bus services disproportionately impact women.

In research published by the NFWI in 2021, 52% of respondents in Wales told us that their local bus service had been reduced in the last 3 years. As a result of these changes, 23% said they are now unable to make this journey and 20% said they leave the house less frequently. 52% told us that their access to basic services had been negatively impacted and 38% said the same about accessing health services and 48% about social activities. Moreover, 28% of respondents said this had negatively impacted their mental health and 32% felt more isolated.

We have welcomed the ambitious plans set out by the Welsh Government in Llwybr Newydd and Bws Cymru along with the commitment to introduce legislation for bus reform later in the year. However it will take time for these to come into effect. We would like to see action taken now to protect bus services from further cuts which could impact significantly on people who rely on buses. Additionally, in order to encourage people to move away from their reliance on cars, it will be essential that people can access an affordable, accessible and reliable public transport network. Long-term, sustainable funding for bus services will be key to delivering this.

We would be grateful for your support in highlighting our concerns.

Yn gywir

Rhian Connick
Head of NFWI-Wales