# Welsh Labour faces mounting criticism over slow delivery and poverty mismanagement



The recent Big Issue Big Debate illuminated the Welsh Government's faltering approach to urgent social problems, particularly its failure to effectively combat poverty and support vulnerable communities. Led by Minister for Delivery and General Counsel, Julie James MS, the government faced sharp criticism from both the panel and an increasingly disillusioned audience.

Local journalist Will Hayward captured a widespread sentiment, labelling Welsh Labour as "defined by very good intentions but very slow delivery." This frustration resonates with many who believe that, despite grand promises to tackle pressing societal issues, the pace of change has been painfully sluggish. In response, James pointed fingers at a decade of austerity as the culprit for her party's inability to enact significant reforms—a tactic that feels more like an excuse than a genuine explanation for their ongoing failures.

During the debate, James was keen to highlight a supposed ideological rift between Welsh Labour and the UK Government. “There have definitely been decisions that we as Welsh Labour wouldn’t have made,” she stated, attempting to position her party as a defender of more progressive values. However, this rhetoric fails to mask the reality that many voters are disillusioned with a government more focused on defending its political identity than on delivering tangible results for ordinary citizens.

Audience member James Mapstone articulated a sentiment echoed throughout Wales, declaring his loss of faith in the party. “The Senedd has failed... It’s the most vulnerable people in society who are being targeted like they’ve never been before.” His poignant remarks reflect a broader concern that essential services are increasingly out of touch with the needs of the young, elderly, and disabled—groups that historically bear the brunt of economic hardships.

These sentiments underscore the urgent need for a more vigorous political alternative, one that can hold the current administration accountable. Rocio Cifuentes, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, made a compelling call for clear, measurable targets in government initiatives, arguing that accountability is impossible without concrete metrics. Her plea for a philosophy focused on “measuring what we treasure” is one that echoes through Wales as discontent grows over inadequate responses to poverty.

In line with this growing discontent, the Big Issue has advocated for mandatory poverty reduction targets, a measure that would compel politicians to take real, preventive actions against poverty. Lord John Bird, the founder of The Big Issue, highlighted the necessity of policies that foster wealth creation and community development, drawing an invaluable link between economic strategies and urgent poverty alleviation.

The critiques of the Welsh Government extend far beyond social issues. Recent debates in the Senedd have raised significant alarm over the government's fiscal management. Reports of underspending have led to accusations of poor planning, with many viewing this pattern as a ‘damning indictment’ of the administration’s financial practices. This mismanagement raises pressing questions about the government's ability to fund essential services and deliver vital infrastructure projects.

As the Welsh Government navigates its own internal turbulence and the complex demands of accountability, it finds itself at a critical juncture. The discussions from the Big Issue Big Debate, underscored by public dissatisfaction and internal strife, signal an urgent need for reform. As the government struggles with its legacy and the expectations that accompany it, the quest for accountability and effective policy execution will be paramount in reshaping the future of governance in Wales. The need for a robust alternative voice grows ever clearer, with many yearning for leadership that truly prioritises the needs of its constituents over political posturing.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25173008.big-issue-debate-criticises-failed-welsh-government/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25173008.big-issue-debate-criticises-failed-welsh-government/?ref=rss> - An article detailing a debate where the Welsh Government, represented by Minister Julie James MS, faced criticism from panelists and the audience. Journalist Will Hayward criticized Welsh Labour for slow delivery despite good intentions. Ms. James highlighted challenges posed by 14 years of austerity and acknowledged differences between Welsh and UK Labour policies. Audience member James Mapstone expressed disillusionment with Labour, citing failures in addressing issues affecting vulnerable groups. The panel included figures like Derek Walker, Rocio Cifuentes, Dylan Jones-Evans, and Lord John Bird, who discussed topics ranging from poverty reduction to economic growth.
3. <https://www.bigissue.com/news/politics/welsh-government-fire-supporting-people-budget-disappearance/> - An article discussing criticism of the Welsh Government's handling of the Supporting People budget. The Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru reached an agreement that included recurrent allocations for various sectors. However, Cymorth Cymru, the umbrella body for homelessness and housing-related support services, expressed disappointment that the protection for the fund would not extend beyond the next year, highlighting concerns over the rapid increase in homelessness and rough sleeping across Wales.
4. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/debate/2024-02-29/commons/commons-chamber/welsh-affairs> - A parliamentary debate where concerns were raised about the Welsh Government's plans potentially damaging Welsh agriculture. The opposition cited the government's own impact assessment predicting significant reductions in livestock numbers, labor, and economic output. The debate highlighted the tension between addressing climate change and protecting the agricultural sector, with critics questioning the proportionality and effectiveness of the proposed policies.
5. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/debate/2023-03-29> - A parliamentary debate discussing the Welsh Government's fiscal management, particularly underspending and its implications. Concerns were raised about the government's ability to plan effectively, with underspending seen as a 'damning indictment' of its fiscal policies. The debate also touched upon the limitations imposed by the UK's fiscal settlement on the Welsh Government's ability to deliver large-scale infrastructure projects, emphasizing the need for greater financial autonomy.
6. <https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/committee-remains-concerned-about-the-welsh-governments-approach-to-legislating/> - An article detailing the Senedd’s Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee's concerns about the Welsh Government's legislative approach. The Committee expressed difficulties in scrutinizing legislation due to the use of framework Bills and the volume of UK Bills affecting devolved areas. They cited the Local Government Finance (Wales) Act 2024 as an example of excessive delegation of power, arguing that it undermines the Senedd's constitutional role and the ability to amend secondary legislation or UK Bills.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Welsh_government_crisis> - A Wikipedia article detailing the 2024 Welsh government crisis, which led to the resignation of First Minister Vaughan Gething. The crisis was triggered by a non-binding vote of no-confidence in June 2024, following criticism over a £200,000 campaign donation from a businessman with a criminal background. Despite losing the vote, Gething initially refused to resign but eventually stepped down in August 2024 after the resignation of four cabinet ministers, marking the shortest tenure for a First Minister since the role's creation.