

# Welsh Government update on planning and enforcement appeals backlog

Welsh Government has given an update on the planning and enforcement appeals backlog that is impacting firms in Wales.

Last year the staff and functions of Planning Inspectorate Wales transferred from English to Welsh Governments.

It saw a new division called Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) set up but it wasn't a smooth switch over with delays in the transfer of data which has led to a major backlog in the system.

Business Live reported last month on firms that were waiting for months longer than the target deadline and how this was affecting planned investments.

Janet Finch-Saunders, Senedd member for Aberconwy, and Shadow Minister for Climate Change, previously wrote to the Minister for Climate Change to call for urgent action so that live appeals and casework can continue to be actioned.

Welsh Government yesterday published an update on the situation.

They said: "We have been working hard to reduce the delays to starting new planning and enforcement appeals and issuing decisions on those cases, since our last update in January 2022.

- We are now issuing the majority of decisions within the ministerial target,
- All new appeals, submitted up until 1 March, have been registered

“Many appeals have been started since 1 October, but there remains a backlog of cases waiting to be started.

“We have put in place arrangements to reduce this backlog at a reasonable and consistent rate, not to adversely impact on resources in Local Planning Authorities and to reflect our current reduced resources.

“We would still ask you to please wait to contact us until the expiration of nine weeks after receiving an initial acknowledgement, if enquiring about an appeal.”

Speaking last month, Jamie Bradshaw, director at chartered town planners Owen Devenport Ltd, said: “The recent delays in the registration and handling of appeals have been difficult for agents and appellants alike, as it has increased uncertainty for those seeking an appeal and made handling of the process more difficult for agents.

“While the current situation is of course difficult it is clear that it is vital that more resources are given to the Inspectorate to allow them to address the backlog, and also to ensuring the proper function of the planning system.”

Mrs Finch-Saunders said: “The Welsh Government handling of the transition to PEDW is symbolic of bad management that is costing economic growth and business investment in Wales.

“With an entrenched housing crisis across Wales, this farcical situation is completely unacceptable and unprofessional. The Minister must now apologise and arrange for extra resources to be given to empower PEDW to address the backlog and ensure the proper function of the planning system.”