

Lord Timpson OBE
Minister of State, Ministry of
Justice

Dear Lord Timpson,

17 April 2025

Invitation to joint ministerial session on criminal justice

Thank you for agreeing to our proposed scrutiny session on criminal justice. We are content to proceed on the basis of separate rather than joint sessions and I am pleased that your officials have confirmed your availability for 15.00 – 16.45 on 19 May. The session will be in hybrid format and while we would have preferred to welcome you to the Senedd in person, we understand that other diary commitments mean that you will be appearing remotely.

In terms of arrangements for the session, we previously indicated that we extend an invitation to one or two members of the Senedd's Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee and the Health and Social Care Committee, and the Commons Welsh Affairs Committee) to ensure a joined-up approach. We are keen to include a representative (between one and two depending on numbers) of both committees at the session and would be happy to confirm final numbers with you very soon.

You indicated that you would be grateful for an idea of the agenda for the session. Members are likely to want to explore the following topics:

Key issues highlighted in the [2023 Prisons and Sentencing in Wales report by Dr Robert Jones](#): including concerns about ethnic disparities in custodial sentences the increasing rate of the Welsh prison population, and number of Welsh prisoners held in English prisons;

Data Transparency and reporting: the availability of data and transparency of criminal justice statistics in Wales, where comprehensive data for Wales is not routinely published and must be obtained through Freedom of Information requests;

Prison safety and reform: the need for improved prison safety measures in response to increases in assaults and self-harm incidents in Welsh prisons, particularly at HMP Parc; use of remand and recall; and the impact of the UK Government's early release scheme on the Welsh prison population;

Female prisoners: Recent developments in establishment of the Residential Women's Centre in Swansea, aimed at providing local support and rehabilitation for Welsh female offenders;

Joint working to reduce reoffending: collaboration with the Welsh Government to implement measures that lower reoffending rates, such as improving employment opportunities for former prisoners; and

Preparations for the further devolution of justice: plans for the devolution of justice, particularly in relation to probation services, and how these plans will address current concerns about performance and staffing issues within the probation service in Wales.

The list is not exhaustive. We recognise the need to avoid areas outside your ministerial portfolio, but members are ultimately free to choose what to ask.

Thank you again for your willingness to engage with us on these important matters. We look forward to the session and in the meantime if you have any questions please liaise with the Committee Clerking Team.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the LJC Committee, HSC Committee and the WAC.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.