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Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros New
Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change
and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

2 October 2025

Dear Mike,

Further to the Committee's meeting of 9 June, I agreed to write to the Committee to provide further information on a couple of matters. The first of which was the structure of justice related meetings - see Annex A for details.

The second issue I proposed to write about was intergovernmental meetings. As I noted before the Committee, in my view the intergovernmental structures generally are being used more regularly and effectively than before. Since September 2024, there have been more than thirty Intergovernmental Relations meetings, including at the two top tier, reflecting a more regular and strengthened pattern of engagement with UK Government.

In relation to specific portfolio interministerial groups (IMGs), we would like to see more regular meetings of the IMG UK-EU Relations given the ongoing negotiations with the EU. This would lead to improvements in the engagement between the UK and Devolved Governments in an area of clear mutual interest.

I would note that good IGR is not simply about the number of meetings taking place - it should be measured in the quality, not purely the quantity, of engagement. The governments must ensure that we are coming together to discuss the right things, at the right times. We continue to believe that the Review of Intergovernmental Relations can provide the necessary machinery to support that.

There is always room for improvement, and in my view consistently diarising these meetings as far in advance as possible would bring further benefits. This would greatly aid in advanced planning and horizon scanning and help us to provide timely notifications to committees as required within the Inter-Institutional Agreement with the Senedd.

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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.

The review of the IGR structures, being co-ordinated by the Independent IGR Secretariat with support from officials across all four governments, is looking at the current IGR structures, including the IMGs set out in the Review of Intergovernmental Relations, to determine if they are fit for purpose and identify possible improvements. It is anticipated that the findings and recommendations from this review will be discussed at the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee towards the end of 2025.

Finally, I had a positive meeting with the previous Lord Chancellor recently where we agreed to make swift progress on the UK Government's commitments in relation to exploring devolution of youth justice and probation. These were of course areas the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales recommended prioritising for early devolution, and we remain committed to the set of recommendations that the Commission made. A Written Statement updating on this activity was issued on 7 August and I will continue to update the Senedd on developments in this area.

I hope this letter is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

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a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Annex A - Welsh Government and UK Government engagement

The Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee requested information on the meetings that take place between Welsh Ministers and UK Government on justice matters. The first table summarises the main regular forums in which the Welsh Government and UK Government meet to discuss justice issues. To note, some of these are chaired by ministers but many are governed at the official level. The second table provides an overview of regular ministerial engagements.

Table 1 - Boards and Groups

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
Interministerial Group on Justice	The Interministerial Group on Justice facilitates formal and regular engagement on areas of mutual interest related to justice between departmental ministers from all four governments. The IMG-Justice enables sharing of knowledge and information between administrations and may also act as a forum for the resolution of disagreements where remedies have not been achievable at official level.	Membership of IMG-Justice includes as a minimum one minister from the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive that have the relevant responsibilities within their portfolio. One minister from each of the Offices of the Nations will also be invited to attend. Other ministers may be invited on an ad hoc basis depending on the topic of discussion, which may include ministers with expertise on areas outside of justice where it is relevant to the discussion on a particular topic. The IMG-Justice may agree to invite non-governmental stakeholders such as representatives of industry or NGOs in an advisory or consultative role.	Three times a year.
Interministerial Group on Safety Security and Migration	The Interministerial Group ensures formal and regular interaction between the Home Office and devolved governments of the UK on matters relating to safety, security and migration. See <u>Interministerial Group for Safety, Security and</u>	The Home Secretary and Lords Minister representing the UK Government, and relevant ministers for the devolved governments. Ministerial representation may vary at each meeting and will be informed by the agenda. Other ministers may be invited on an ad	Three times a year

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>Migration for the full terms of reference.</p>	<p>hoc basis depending on the topic of discussion.</p>	
<p>Criminal Justice Board for Wales</p>	<p>The Criminal Justice Board for Wales brings together criminal justice organisations and partners to tackle cross-cutting challenges. The Board undertakes the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide collective and decisive leadership in the delivery of Criminal Justice in Wales • To provide a space to bring together the Local Criminal Justice Boards in Wales with devolved and non-devolved agencies, to agree the key criminal justice issues that need to be resolved for victims, witnesses or people who have offended across Wales. • To develop and deliver an annual work programme that delivers the change that is needed across the Criminal Justice System in Wales. • Publish an annual report to evidence the work of the Board and increase public confidence of the work being undertaken to improve the justice system in Wales (the annual reports can be found on the UK Government website) • To enhance connectivity between the Local Criminal Justice Boards in Wales and share good practice, reduce duplication and escalate issues of concerns • To enable collaborative strategic decision-making between devolved and non-devolved partners on 	<p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p> <p>HM Courts and Tribunals Service</p> <p>Youth Justice Board</p> <p>Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners</p> <p>Welsh Chief Constables</p> <p>Welsh Government officials</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association</p> <p>Voluntary sector bodies</p> <p>Victims Commissioner</p> <p>Public Health Wales</p> <p>Police Liaison Unit</p> <p>Home Office</p> <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>Violence Prevention Unit</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>criminal justice systemic and policy matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To collate qualitative and quantitative evidence to effectively monitor the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Wales • To apply an evidence-led approach to making practice, policy and commissioning decisions. • To support and enhance alignment and connectivity across family, civil and criminal justice system. 		
<p>Policing Partnership Board for Wales</p>	<p>The Policing Partnership Board for Wales provides a bridge between Policing in Wales and the full range of devolved and non-devolved public service partners which the police service engages with in Wales.</p> <p>The purpose of the Board is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate collaboration between policing in Wales (represented by the four Police and Crime Commissioners, and four Chief Constables), Welsh Government, UK Government and both devolved and reserved public services, in order to promote community safety and service delivery. • Agree joint solutions to key challenges facing devolved and non-devolved public services in Wales, supported by a work programme with clear jointly-owned objectives and by a focus on problem solving and collective action to secure delivery. The principles underpinning this work programme are set out in 	<p>Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip (Chair)</p> <p>Other Cabinet Secretaries or Ministers as appropriate</p> <p>Welsh Government Community Safety</p> <p>Chief Executive NHS Wales</p> <p>Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners</p> <p>Welsh Chief Constables</p> <p>Police Liaison Unit</p> <p>Home Office</p> <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p> <p>Office of the Secretary of State for Wales</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association</p> <p>Public Health Wales</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>the Memorandum of Understanding referred to previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the interface between policing and devolved areas functions effectively in Wales, and Welsh Government, Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables are fully sighted on their respective priorities and activity in a way which supports community safety across Wales. • Collectively consider emerging opportunities for or risks impacting on Welsh public services, working as a Board to address these and deliver the best available solutions for Welsh communities • Enable Welsh Government, Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to identify the implications of UK and Welsh Government legislative programmes and budget processes, taking a joint approach to planning and delivery at both a strategic and operational level which maximises outcomes for the Welsh public. 		
VAWDASV National Partnership Board	<p>The National Partnership Board provides a collaborative oversight to support the progression and delivery of the National VAWDASV Strategy 2022 to 2026.</p> <p>The Board scrutinises the activities of the VAWDASV Blueprint Programme Board and the 6 associated</p>	<p>Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip (co-chair)</p> <p>South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner (co-chair)</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association</p> <p>BAWSO</p>	Quarterly

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>workstreams to ensure accountability. The Board also provides a forum to share decisions and commitments. Membership includes senior representatives and strategic leaders from all sectors and regions across Wales.</p> <p>See VAWDASV National Partnership Board for full terms of reference.</p>	<p>New Pathways</p> <p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p> <p>North Wales Police</p> <p>North Wales Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Commissioner</p> <p>Older People's Commissioner</p> <p>Older People's Commissioners for Wales Office</p> <p>Public Health Wales</p> <p>NHS Wales</p> <p>Aneurin Bevan University Health Board</p> <p>Welsh Government officials</p> <p>Welsh Refugee Council</p>	
<p>Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel</p>	<p>The Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel is a jointly convened body by the Welsh Government and the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB). It is established by the YJB under its Scheme of Delegation and by the Welsh Government. The Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel is established to bring together on a national level, strategic partners who play a role in the operation of the youth justice system and preventing offending by children to support the effective oversight and collective leadership of the youth justice</p>	<p>Welsh Government Community Safety (co-chair)</p> <p>Youth Justice Board (co-chair)</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association</p> <p>Health Board representative</p> <p>HMCTS Wales</p> <p>SOLACE Cymru</p> <p>Youth Magistrates in Wales</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>system in Wales. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing evidence and insights on performance and practice; • Analysing a high-level overview of performance of the whole system, considering how each part of the system is performing; identifying opportunities for systemic improvement; • Providing decisive, impactful action and advice to justice bodies and other relevant organisations which promotes better outcomes for children and supports them towards fulfilling, crime-free lives • Monitoring the actions taken in response to Panel advice, holding actors to account on their actions and celebrating progress and success. • Acting as a strategic reference group for change programmes impacting on the youth justice system in Wales, including the Youth Justice Blueprint and work on the devolution of youth justice to Wales. 	<p>Association of Directors of Education Wales</p> <p>Police and Crime Commissioner representative</p> <p>Youth Custody Service</p> <p>Violence Prevention Unit</p> <p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p> <p>Children’s Commissioner for Wales</p> <p>YOT Managers representative</p> <p>Head of the Safer Communities Network</p> <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>Child Centred Policing lead</p> <p>Police Liaison Unit</p> <p>Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice</p>	
<p>All Wales Women in Justice Board</p>	<p>The AWWIJ Board has been established as the principal strategic group for matters relating to women who are in, or at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System in Wales.</p> <p>As of April 2025, the joint Welsh Government and MoJ Women’s Justice Blueprint moved into a new delivery phase, building on the existing framework and principles to continue to</p>	<p>Welsh Government Community Safety (co-chair)</p> <p>South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner (co-chair)</p> <p>Welsh Government Homelessness Prevention</p> <p>Welsh Government Health</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
	<p>embed best practice in the justice system for women in Wales</p> <p>The AWWIJ Board has been recognised as the appropriate forum to provide strategic direction for criminal and social justice partners to help ensure ongoing effective delivery of the strategic priorities and principles of the Blueprint and within broader policy relating to women in the criminal justice system in Wales.</p>	<p>Welsh Government VAWDASV</p> <p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p> <p>Policing in Wales</p> <p>Crown Prosecution Service</p> <p>Home Office</p> <p>HMCTS</p> <p>Public Health Wales</p> <p>NHS Wales</p> <p>Community Network Organisations (Clinks, Community Justice Cymru)</p> <p>Anti-Racism Programme</p> <p>Ministry of Justice – National Women’s Team</p> <p>Youth Justice Board</p>	
Wales Safer Communities Board	<p>The purpose of the Wales Safer Communities Board is to provide leadership, oversight and direction to a joint programme of work with the aim of ensuring effective shared leadership is provided to support local partnership working in addressing community safety that will in turn support safe, strong and more confident communities. The Board also provides governance to the Wales Safer Communities Network.</p> <p>The full terms of reference and list of priorities can be found on the Safer Communities website.</p>	<p>Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners (co-chair)</p> <p>Welsh Local Government Association (co-chair) Welsh Chief Constables</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>SOLACE Cymru</p> <p>Head of Safer Communities Network</p> <p>Welsh Government Community Safety Division</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Services</p> <p>HM Prison and Probation Service</p>	Quarterly

Board/Group	Purpose/Terms of Reference	Members	Frequency
		Community Justice Cymru Community Safety Officers Violence Prevention Unit Public Health Wales	
IOM Cymru Board	The IOM Cymru Board reports to the All Wales Criminal Justice Board and is led by HMPPS in Wales and Policing in Wales, with representation from a wide range of criminal and social justice partners, including the Welsh Government. It has responsibility for supporting and facilitating the coordinated development and delivery of IOM across Wales, including oversight of the IOM Cymru programme of work.	HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales (co-chair) Policing in Wales (co-chair) Welsh Government Youth Justice Board Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners Third Sector	Quarterly
Justice in Wales Strategy Group	The Group brings together senior Welsh Government and UK Government officials to discuss emerging justice issues and ensure coordination across governments. The terms of reference are currently being reviewed following a 10 month hiatus.	Welsh Government HM Prison and Probation Service Ministry of Justice Home Office	Twice a year
Hwb Doeth	The purpose of Hwb Doeth is to bring together knowledge, skills and experience to encourage the development of youth justice practice in Wales. The forum is used to discuss and share evidence-based practice, provide advice, guidance and support to youth justice services so that they are able to develop and improve practice. There are also several sub-groups, including four regional groups, that meet quarterly.	Welsh Government Youth Justice Board Regional representation from Welsh Universities Regional representation from YOT Manager's Cymru and secure estate	Quarterly

Table 2 - Regular ministerial meetings

The table below details the regular meetings that had been established between WG and UKG ministers to discuss justice issues prior to the recent UKG ministerial reshuffle. Where there has been a change of minister it is anticipated that similar arrangements will be put in place with new ministers in due course. In addition to this, ad hoc meetings are arranged when necessary, such as the recent meeting between the Deputy First Minister and Lord Chancellor. Justice issues will of course also be raised on occasion in meetings with UK ministers who have cross cutting roles such as the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, or the Secretary of State for Wales.

Meeting	Purpose	Frequency
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and Sir Nic Dakin	To discuss joint working under the current settlement including activity taken forward under the Youth Justice Blueprint.	Regular engagement (as needed)
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and Lord Timpson	To discuss issues across the Prison and Probation Service and progress on issues such as data disaggregation and the residential women's centre in Wales.	Regular engagement (as needed)
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery and Lord Ponsonby	To discuss constitutional and justice matters such as courts, tribunals, legal services and access to justice.	Bi-monthly (every other month) excluding summer recess.
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and Executive Director, HM Prison and Probation Service	To discuss issues across the Prison and Probation Service and progress on issues such as data disaggregation and the residential women's centre in Wales.	Regular engagement (as needed)
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and lead Police and Crime Commissioner	To discuss issues affecting policing in Wales	Monthly
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and Youth Justice Board member for Wales	Youth Justice Board member for Wales provides and update on youth justice issues.	Biannual
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip and Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention	To discuss issues across portfolios or any topical/political concerns, e.g. Police Landscape Reform, Safer Streets Mission.	Quarterly