

Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Monitoring Report

September 2025

Key points

In July, the UK and German Governments signed a [Treaty on Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation](#). The UK Government also [published a list](#) of 17 projects that both governments intend to bring forward under the Treaty's first implementation plan.

In May, the UK and EU announced [their latest agreement](#), Common Understanding, which provides for increased cooperation and the negotiation of additional UK-EU agreements in future. The European Commission has since published [its recommendation to the Council of the European Union for negotiation mandates](#) on two elements of the Common Understanding agreement,

The [second meeting of the Council of the Nations and Regions](#) was held on 23 May 2025. According to the Welsh Government, discussion focussed on “developments in international trade, and opportunities arising from artificial intelligence for economic growth and public services”.

In July 2025, the Senedd [voted to approve](#) the Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) Order 2025. The Order outlines the procedures for conducting elections to the Senedd.

The UK Government has [published its response](#) to the Review of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and Public Consultation. While welcoming



the UK Government's response, the Welsh Government continues to call for the Act to be repealed.

The Welsh Government provided an update on recent discussions with the UK Government regarding the devolution of justice to Wales. Talks included realigning youth justice responsibilities and a potential Memorandum of Understanding on probation services.

The President of the Welsh Tribunals published his latest annual report for the financial year 2024-2025. The report outlines the number of applications made to each Tribunal and provides details about the financial changes that have occurred this year.

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1. Introduction

The Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee has a broad remit covering a wide range of areas. This monitoring report is intended to provide Members of the Committee with an update on key policy developments related to the Committee's remit. The report covers the period from **1 May 2025 to 16 September 2025**.

The Committee will consider these issues and any actions that it wishes to take in response. This report is being published to inform stakeholders of some of the issues currently under consideration by the Committee.

A glossary of key terms is included as an Annex.

2. UK-EU relations

2.1. Common Understanding

On 19 May 2025, the UK and EU announced their latest agreement, Common Understanding, which provides for increased cooperation and the negotiation of additional UK-EU agreements in future.

A summary is available from Senedd Research. The First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning have welcomed the agreement and its commitment to negotiate a youth mobility scheme.

On 16 July, the European Commission published its recommendation to the Council of the European Union for negotiation mandates on two key elements of the Common Understanding agreement.

These are the creation of a common sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) area between the EU and the UK and the linking of their respective emissions trading systems. Once the recommendation is adopted by the Council, the European Commission will be able to enter detailed negotiations with the UK.

On 26 August, the UK Minister for the Constitution and EU Relations, Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, made a speech on the future relationship with the EU.

He said the UK Government's aim was to have an SPS agreement with the EU in place by 2027. The Minister said detailed negotiations will begin in the autumn.

2.2. The Multiannual Financial Framework (EU budget)

On 16 July, the European Commission published its proposals for its next long-term budget, known as the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

It will cover the 2028-2034 period and sets out the proposals and budget for the next round of EU funding programmes. The proposals total €1.98tn in total. Some significant changes are proposed to current funding programmes. Key proposals for funding programmes of interest to Wales include:

- **Erasmus +:** The EU's international exchange programme has a proposed budget of €40.8bn over the period.

- **AgoraEU:** This will be the EU's new culture, media, citizens, equality and rights fund. It's proposed budget is €8.582bn.
- **The European Competitiveness Fund and Horizon Europe:** This would be a new fund worth €409bn. Horizon Europe will remain a separate programme within the fund but close collaboration between the two programme and the wider fund will be expected. €131bn of the fund will support investment in defence, security and space in support of the development of a European Defence Union.
- **Regional and cohesion funds including INTERREG:** The European Commission is proposing that many of the existing funding programmes including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), funding for fisheries, regional and cohesion funding should be brought into a single **National and Regional Partnership Plan** in each Member State. Although each plan will contain ring-fenced strands for things like CAP this would still be a significant change. INTERREG which funds inter-regional and territorial cooperation would become part of this plan with its own chapter **The proposed budget for INTERREG** is €10 billion Euro. The PEACEPLUS programme which funds cross-border and community cooperation in Northern will remain a distinct strand.
- **Third country participation:** Key for the UK and Wales will be the extent to which third countries outside of the EU are able to associate to these funding programmes. The UK already associates to the current Horizon Europe programme and **has said it** may associate to Erasmus +. The proposals would allow for third party association in full or in part provided that it offers a fair balance of contributions and benefits.

Member States in the Council and Members of the European Parliament will now consider and scrutinise the proposals and the text of the regulations proposed to implement the budget. Both institutions must agree before the final financial framework can be adopted.

2.3. Bilateral relations

In July, the UK and German Governments signed a Treaty on Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation.

The agreement contains chapters on:

- Diplomacy, Security and Development;

- Defence Cooperation;
- Internal Security, Justice and Migration;
- Economic Growth, Resilience and Competitiveness;
- Open and Resilient Societies; and
- Climate, Energy, Nature, Environment and Agriculture

It also commits the Governments to hold ministerial consultations every two years, which will “endorse an implementation plan of projects under the treaty”. The foreign ministers will meet annually to review the bilateral relationship.

The UK Government published a list of 17 projects that both governments intend to bring forward under the first implementation plan.

The treaty is subject to ratification, and will also trigger the Senedd’s own treaty scrutiny process. It will enter force once the instruments have been exchanged.

UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer MP, and French President Emmanuel Macron met on 16 June, ahead of the UK-France Summit in July.

In a declaration which followed the summit, both leaders set out a number of joint commitments in relation to foreign policy, defence, irregular migration, growth and cultural partnership.

The British-Irish Council held its 43rd Summit meeting on 13 June

It discussed approaches to using AI in public services and in public sector reform. Representing the Welsh Government at the meeting, First Minister Eluned Morgan MS, noted the “ethical responsibilities that governments across these islands share in deploying AI”.

2.4. Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA)

The seventh Interparliamentary Forum was held on 12 June and discussed the formation of new PPA delegations.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the Forum noted an update provided by Lord Ricketts, Vice-Chair of the UK-EU PPA on how it has operated since the formation of new delegations, including “the considerable change in membership” of the newly established PPA. The Forum discussed how the PPA could further enhance its effectiveness and “noted the challenge of incorporating representation from the devolved parliaments”.

2.5. Withdrawal Agreement

The Minister for the Cabinet Office, Nick Thomas Symonds MP and European Commissioner for Trade Maroš Šefčovič gave a joint statement in April, following a meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee.

They reiterated the importance of citizens rights, welcoming the “legislative step taken by the UK Government relating to legal clarity for EU citizens with status under the EU Settlement Scheme and look forward to its practical application”. They agreed to strengthen cooperation on all citizens’ rights issues. They also noted work undertaken to implement the Windsor Framework, including on safeguards allowing new customs facilitations on parcels and freight which took effect on 1 May.

The UK Government and European Commission issued a statement after a meeting of the Specialised Committee on the Implementation of the Windsor Framework.

It noted progress in the deployment of new facilitations in the customs area for freight and parcel movements, and also in relation to the pet movement scheme. However, it stated that “significant work remains to be done to deliver in full the safeguards underpinning the flexibilities for the movement of agri-foods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland”.

Lord Murphy published his report on the outcome of his Independent Review of the Windsor Framework.

On 10 December 2024 the Northern Ireland Assembly held its first consent vote on the continued application of the Windsor Framework to Northern Ireland.

A majority of Assembly Members voted to give consent to its continued application but there was no cross-community support. In these circumstances the UK Government is required to commission an independent review of the Framework’s operation. Lord Murphy was appointed to undertake this work.

Lord Murphy published his report on 4 September. It makes several recommendations aimed at securing cross-community support for the Framework. Including in relation to better coordination between governments, better guidance and advice for business, further resource for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to assess impact, reduction in friction for logistics and haulage companies and that businesses should be updated regularly on progress by the UK to agree an SPS agreement with the EU. The UK Government has six months to respond.

2.6. Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Following the final ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the UK Government's closure of sandeel fishing will remain in place.

However, the tribunal found that the UK Government did not sufficiently regard the principle of proportionality, particularly in relation to EU rights during the adjustment period. This is a requirement under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

In an update on its response to the ruling, the UK Government stated that it had written to the EU to confirm the measures taken to comply with the sandeel Arbitration Tribunal's ruling and confirmed a new decision-making process has been completed. The outcome of the new process determined that the closure of sandeel fishing remains necessary.

This Committee alongside three other Senedd Committees published a joint report on the Implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement on 10 September. The report marks the first time that four Senedd Committees have collaborated on a report.

2.7. Regulatory alignment/divergence

UK in a Changing Europe published its UK-EU Divergence tracker for the period Q4 2024-Q2 2025.

It found 21 cases of regulatory alignment identified, compared to four from the last edition of the tracker, which was published in November 2024.

It also found 15 cases of UK-led divergence, 12 EU-led cases of divergence and five cases of managed divergence. Managed divergence refers to "the UK and/or EU taking steps to manage the effects of ongoing divergence".

It also discussed an emerging trend of voluntary alignment, "where the UK unilaterally mirrors EU regulations, without any bilateral agreement". It also suggested that "a significant proportion of the EU-led 'passive' divergence found in this tracker could soon lead to UK voluntary alignment".

It found that the only area of significant UK-led divergence is financial services regulation.

2.8. Retained EU law

On 8 May, the Welsh Government published the third bi-annual update on retained EU law (REUL).

This provides information on relevant statutory instruments made under the REUL Act between June 2024 and December 2024, following the publication of the UK Government's Assimilated Law Parliamentary report for the same period. The UK Government's report states that it laid two SIs in reserved areas and so consent was not sought:

- The Aviation Safety (Amendment) Regulations 2024; and
- The Vehicle Drivers (Certificates of Professional Competence) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

The Welsh Government highlights that it identified a further SI which the UK Government sought consent from the Welsh Government for the use of its REUL Act powers, The Official Controls (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

The report notes that the UK Government published its green paper [Invest 2035, the UK's modern industrial strategy](#) in October 2024 and that as the UK Government's intentions regarding regulatory reform and potential use of powers in the REUL act becomes clear ' the Welsh Government are ready to work closely with them on potential opportunities, implications and benefits for Wales'.

2.9. EU affairs

The President of the European Commission [made her annual address to the European Parliament on the State of the European Union on 10 September, in which she said that the whole of the European continent “is in a fight” for peace, for independence, for its values and for its democracies.](#)

The President outlined a number of initiatives the EU Commission will introduce in relation to investment in domestic production in critical sectors and technologies within the EU, trade including new steel safeguards and new funding initiatives in areas such as research and development. Measures announced also include the further development of the European Democracy Shield and a new European Centre for Democratic Resilience.

3. Intergovernmental and interparliamentary relations

The Welsh Government published an annual report on intergovernmental relations in May 2025. The report covers the period from April 2023 to March 2024.

The report states that the previous UK Government's approach to intergovernmental relations "undermined the devolution settlement and damaged the union of the United Kingdom". However, it also outlines some areas where the Welsh and UK governments worked together more positively, including in relation to freeports, the development of legislation relating to tobacco and vapes, and trade policy.

Following her session on intergovernmental relations with the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister in March 2025, the First Minister wrote to that Committee to provide further information.

In her letter, the First Minister discussed the Welsh Government's reporting of intergovernmental meetings. On the timeliness of reporting, she said that:

...officials in the central intergovernmental relations team will further emphasise through internal discussions, training and guidance the importance of swift reporting of information related to formal intergovernmental meetings in line with the Inter Institutional Relations Agreement.

On the level of detail provided following meetings, she said that this "will vary due to the nature of the discussions and confidentiality commitments", and that this limitation is "accepted and reflected in the Inter Institutional Relations Agreement itself".

The second meeting of the Council of the Nations and Regions was held on 23 May 2025. According to the Welsh Government, discussion focussed on "developments in international trade, and opportunities arising from artificial intelligence for economic growth and public services".

On the same day, the Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments met. Discussion focussed on "significant global developments" including in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Israel-Gaza, and recent announcements relating to UK trade

with the EU, US and India. The (then upcoming) UK Government Spending Review was also discussed.

The First Minister also reported a short bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister on the same day.

The Secretary of State for Wales, Jo Stevens MP, gave evidence to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee on how the UK Government is delivering for Wales.

She told the Committee that she works “really closely together” with the First Minister and that they “support but also challenge each other...to achieve the best for Wales”.

The Secretary of State pointed to two examples of positive intergovernmental working – funds deployed through the steel transition board, and the foreign direct investment into Shotton Mill.

The Welsh Government and Department for Work and Pensions agreed a memorandum of understanding on funding for an Economic Inactivity Trailblazer in Wales.

The aim of the Trailblazer is to engage with and support economically inactive people through both UK and Welsh government funded provision. It will also specifically channel support towards people who have health conditions, are disabled or have caring responsibilities. The agreement is set to remain in effect until March 2026.

The Scottish Parliament’s Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee has launched an inquiry on the transparency of intergovernmental activity and its implications for parliamentary scrutiny and Ministerial accountability.

Among other things, the inquiry will seek to consider how formal intergovernmental structures are working, take stock of informal intergovernmental relations, and explore how inter-parliamentary work can aid the scrutiny of intergovernmental activity.

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre published a briefing on intergovernmental relations since the 2024 general election.

The briefing covers “developments relevant to the UK Government's commitment to 'reset' its relationship with the devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland”.

4. Legislation

4.1. Senedd

There are currently seven Bills progressing through the Senedd at time of writing.

Six are at stage one:

- [British Sign Language \(Wales\) Bill](#) (Member Bill introduced by Mark Isherwood MS);
- [Building Safety \(Wales\) Bill](#);
- [Environment \(Principles, Governance and Biodiversity Targets\) \(Wales\) Bill](#);
- [Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation \(Wales\) Bill](#);
- [Planning \(Wales\) Bill](#) and [Planning \(Consequential Provisions\) \(Wales\) Bill](#) (both of these are at 'Initial Consideration' stage).

One is at stage two:

- [Bus Services \(Wales\) Bill](#).

The Welsh Government published a draft Bill which would prohibit greyhound racing in Wales.

The Welsh Government expects to introduce the Bill formally in the autumn.

The Welsh Government published its fourth and final Programme for Government Annual Report for the current Senedd term.

The report sets out the progress made towards the well-being objectives under the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

On 11 July, the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister held a session on Welsh Government delivery.

The Committee focused on delivery in relation to the First Minister's four priorities that she identified shortly after taking office: health, green growth, providing opportunities, and connecting communities.

The Welsh Government made the Amendments to Subordinate Legislation (Minimum Landing Size and Miscellaneous Corrections) (Wales) Order 2025

and the Amendments to Subordinate Legislation (Miscellaneous Corrections) (Wales) Regulations 2025.

The instruments deliver commitments made by the Welsh Government to correct errors in existing pieces of secondary legislation

4.2. UK

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill is at second reading in the House of Lords. The Private Members' Bill seeks to allow adults who are terminally ill, subject to safeguards and protections, to request and be provided with assistance to end their own life.

The Bill contains powers for the Welsh Ministers to make regulations providing for Voluntary Assisted Dying Services in Wales and provision relating to the Welsh language. These regulations would be subject to the approval of the Senedd.

The powers to commence these provisions are with the Welsh Ministers, whereas the rest of the Bill will come into force in Wales at the same time as in England, following amendments made to the Bill at report stage in the House of Commons.

The UK Government has published a strategy paper that aims to ensure “modern and secure elections”.

The UK Government says it intends to bring forward an elections bill, which will include provision to:

- Enable 16 and 17 year olds to vote;
- Extend acceptable Voter ID to include bank cards; and
- Introduce new rules to guard against foreign political interference and abuse of campaigners.

The UK Government also expressed a desire to move towards an automated electoral registration system.

These changes would apply to reserved elections (UK Parliament and Police and Crime Commissioner), as well as elections held only in England (local government and mayoral).

The Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords on 5 September.

The Private Members' Bill would allow Scottish and Welsh Ministers (or UK Ministers) to make regulations providing for “the alignment of rules on absent voting arrangements between reserved and devolved elections”.

The LJC Committee published its report on the Welsh Government's LCM on the Bill in July 2025. The Senedd voted to grant legislative consent for the Bill on 16 September 2025.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill is currently at Committee stage in the House of Commons.

Among other changes, the Bill seeks to:

- Introduce new devolution architecture for England, centred around the new category of “strategic authorities”;
- Outline the powers and duties which existing and future strategic authorities will have, and the process by which new powers and duties can be conferred on authorities by the UK Government; and
- Revert all mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections (including in Wales) from the First Past the Post electoral system to the Supplementary Vote.

5. Legislative Consent

Since the UK Government came into office in July 2024, 58 Legislative Consent Memoranda (LCMs) and Supplementary LCMs (SLCMs) have been laid relating to 22 Bills, bringing the total to 173 LCMs and SLCMs relating to 69 Bills in the Sixth Senedd.

Bills for which the Welsh Government has recently laid LCMs include:

- The Victims and Courts Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 20 May 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.
- The Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 21 May 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.
- The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 30 May 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.
- The Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 9 June 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.
- The Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 25 June 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.
- The Pension Schemes Bill. The Welsh Government laid an LCM on 26 June 2025, within which it recommends that consent is given.

In June 2025, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, discussed the proposed new memorandum of understanding on the Sewel Convention.

The Deputy First Minister said that the Welsh Government looked forward to engaging “in detailed discussions on the draft MOU with the UK Government in the weeks and months ahead”.

6. Constitution

The Welsh Government's Innovating Democracy Advisory Group has reported two meetings, in May and June 2025.

At the meeting in May, the group noted the formal terms of reference. At the meeting in June, the group considered a draft work programme, to be agreed at the next meeting.

The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP has been appointed as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations as part of a major reshuffle in the UK Government.

Other appointments include Anna McMorrin MP as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Wales Office, Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP as Secretary of State for Scotland and Rt Hon David Lammy MP as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

The House of Commons' Scottish Affairs Committee and the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee have undertaken inquiries into the funding of public services in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

The Scottish Affairs Committee report concludes that it considers the Barnett Formula "to be fit for purpose" and it is "not convinced there is clear need to reform it significantly".

The report of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee concludes that "one way in which Northern Ireland could reduce its reliance on the vagaries of the Block Grant, Barnett formula and short-term funding would be to raise more revenue itself".

The House of Commons' Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee has opened an inquiry into propriety, ethics and the wider standards landscape in the UK.

The Committee will explore whether the current system of ethical standards regulation is sufficient or fit for purpose.

7. Senedd reform and elections

On 8 July 2025, the Senedd voted to approve the Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) Order 2025. The Order outlines the procedures for conducting elections to the Senedd.

In its report on the Order, the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee identified 36 technical reporting points and 6 merits reporting points.

The Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government to express concern at the high number of defective drafting issues and instances where the English and Welsh language texts do not match, as well as the Welsh Government's intention to address more than 20 errors via the correction prior to making process.

The Welsh Government undertook a consultation on the Draft Senedd Cymru (Disqualification) Order 2025.

The Order will designate particular offices which disqualify the office holders from being a Member of the Senedd, but not from being a candidate to be a Member of the Senedd.

The Welsh Government intends for the draft Order to be brought forward for the Senedd's approval in October 2025.

In July 2025, the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, discussed automatic voter registration.

When asked whether it would be in place for the 2026 Senedd election, she said that there are “many hurdles to overcome” and that it would be a “tall order” to introduce it in time.

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru has provided further information on the Elections Information Platform for devolved elections.

The Platform will provide information to voters about devolved elections including:

- election addresses/candidate statements;
- official election notices; and
- polling station information along with accessibility information.

The platform for the 2026 Senedd election will be launched by March 2026.

The Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jayne Bryant MS, has designated the 16 Constituency Returning Officers ahead of the 2026 election.

The Cabinet Secretary has also designated three Returning Officers for the North Wales, South Wales East, and South Wales West electoral regions for any Senedd by-elections before May 2026.

The Welsh Ministers have made several regulations relating to the Senedd election, including:

- The [Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 \(Exclusions and Variation of Campaign Expenditure Limits\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#). These Regulations set the election expense limits for registered political parties for Senedd elections, while also providing for an exclusion for security related expenses. Election expense limits for individual candidates are provided for in the [Senedd Cymru \(Representation of the People\) Order 2025](#).
- The [Welsh Elections Financial Assistance Scheme \(Disabled Candidates\) Regulations 2025](#). These Regulations establish a scheme to remove barriers facing disabled candidates for Senedd elections.
- The [Senedd Cymru Constituency Regulations 2025](#). These Regulations give effect to the [final determinations](#) of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru in respect of electoral arrangements for Senedd constituencies.

The Welsh Government published a report following a trial to improve how visually impaired people access polling stations.

Participants in the trial reported that any of the voting solutions trialled would improve their voting experience, enabling them to vote independently and secretly.

The Welsh Government has agreed research to progress a recommendation of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.

The Commission recommended that:

...the planned review of the Senedd reforms should be resourced to ensure a robust and evidence-based analysis of

the impact of the changes, including from the perspective of the voter and of democratic accountability.

The Future Senedd Committee published its report on parliamentary business in the Seventh Senedd.

The report makes a series of recommendations for the Senedd's Business Committee. Among the report's conclusions is that the status quo, where the Senedd meets twice a week for Plenary, is not a model that should be considered for the future.

Senedd Research's article provides a [summary of the report](#).

The Chairs' Forum is undertaking a review of committee effectiveness in order to inform the establishment of, and support provided to, committees in the Seventh Senedd.

The review will focus on three broad themes: committee culture, the organisation of committee business, and support provided to Members of committees.

8. UK Internal Market Act / Common Frameworks

The UK Government has published its response to the Review of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and Public Consultation.

The UK Government has committed to a number of changes to the operation of the Act, including to implement exclusions to the Act agreed within a Common Framework, to consider environmental protection and public health alongside economic effects in exclusions and to establish a streamlined process for considering exclusions with an economic impact of less than £10m a year.

The Welsh Government has welcomed the commitments made by the UK Government but restated its continued view that the Act should be repealed and replaced by a system designed around Common Frameworks.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, provided an update on the Welsh Government's plans for a deposit return scheme.

The Welsh Government states that the Welsh scheme will still include glass, however, there will be a “transitional period” during which glass will be collected but without a deposit being applied. The Welsh Government reportedly told the BBC that a scheme will be in place by 1 October 2027.

The Welsh Government has launched a consultation on the scheme, which will end on 10 November 2025.

The Office for the Internal Market has published an update in relation to its Data Strategy Roadmap including topics for further research.

The update reports developments in relation to the evidence base for monitoring the effective operation of the UK internal market, including ongoing work on intra-UK trade data. It also includes a list of research topics for further work.

The UK Government published “a process evaluation of Common Frameworks to understand how these are working in practice”.

The evaluation is based on high-level data gathered across 28 frameworks through a proforma, and in-depth case studies into 6 Common Frameworks

The evaluation identified six key factors to maximise the effectiveness of the programme:

- Increased sharing of good practice across frameworks;
- Increased co-ordination across frameworks;
- Effective levels of stakeholder engagement;
- Increased wider knowledge and awareness of frameworks within governments;
- Central guidance and monitoring of key framework processes; and
- Further evaluation of frameworks in the future.

In July 2025, the former Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Douglas Alexander MP, wrote to Lord Strathclyde with an update on the Common Frameworks programme.

He noted that, of the 32 Frameworks, 1 is finalised, 23 have “completed scrutiny”, 4 are awaiting scrutiny from the Northern Ireland Assembly, and 2 are at earlier stages.

On the 2 remaining, discussions are continuing as to whether a Framework is needed for Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and the UK Government has decided no Framework is needed for Specified Quantities and Packaged Goods.

9. Justice

9.1. Wales

The President of the Welsh Tribunals published his latest annual report for the financial year 2024-2025.

The report outlines the number of applications made to each Tribunal and provides details about the financial changes that have occurred this year, including a recalibration of the Tribunals' Unit budget to reflect the actual operating costs of the Tribunals and agreement of capital expenditure on new IT equipment.

Whilst previously identified differences in pay rates compared to reserved tribunals have been addressed, the President's report says that "material differences" remain in the broader terms and conditions for members of the Welsh Tribunals.

The Welsh Government laid the tenth annual report on the implementation of Law Commission proposals that relate to Welsh devolved matters before the Senedd.

The report covers the period from 15 February 2024 to 14 February 2025 and provides an update on a number of areas that relate to Law Commission proposals.

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS, delivered an oral statement on the Women's and Youth Justice Blueprints.

The Cabinet Secretary praised the "huge amount of positive change through the blueprints" but added that even more could be achieved if the justice system was devolved fully to Wales.

The Welsh Government published a prevention framework for the youth justice blueprint.

In June 2025, the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee held an evidence session with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, and the Counsel General and Minister for Delivery, Julie James MS.

The first part of the session focussed on justice matters. The Deputy First Minister spoke of the Welsh Government's desire to make "rapid progress" on the devolution of justice.

The Equality and Social Justice Committee held two evidence sessions on the criminal justice system in Wales in July 2025.

During the first session, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS, stated that the Welsh Government is looking at the co-commissioning model for probation services that has been developed in Greater Manchester as a starting point before looking towards the transfer of executive and legislative powers in this area.

During the second session, UK Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, Lord Timpson, said that there is a need to explore "co-commissioning and other models", but that his "priority at the moment is to make sure that the massive pressure on the [justice] system stabilises".

In August 2025, the Deputy First Minister provided an update on recent discussions with the UK Government regarding the devolution of justice to Wales.

The Deputy First Minister said that he had agreed with the Lord Chancellor that "officials in both governments would work together to explore options where responsibilities in the youth justice system could be realigned", including strategic oversight, partnership and governance arrangements and funding of youth justice.

Also discussed was "the potential for the Welsh Government to work with HM Prison and Probation Service to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding on probation, similar to the model in place in Greater Manchester".

9.2. UK

The Interministerial Group for Justice held a meeting on 3 July 2025. This was the first meeting since the UK General Election in July 2024.

The Group agreed a new terms of reference and discussed prison capacity, court case loads and legal aid. The Group agreed to discuss digital modernisation and violence against women and girls at the next meeting.

The UK Government has introduced the Sentencing Bill to the UK Parliament.

The Bill takes forward some of the reforms recommended by the Independent Sentencing Review, including introducing a presumption that custodial sentences of 12 months or less should be suspended (unless an exception applies) and extending powers of the courts to suspend custodial sentences for up to three years instead of two.

The Bill would also establish a new model of minimum release points for most sentences where “bad behaviour” will see someone spend longer in custody. The model sets a minimum release point of 33% for standard determinate sentences, with more serious offences having a 50% minimum.

Under the Bill’s proposals, offenders on licence in the community could also be subject to new restrictions, including an expansion of drug testing requirements, prohibition from driving, and bans from public events (including sporting events) and pubs, bars and nightclubs.

Claire Waxman has been appointed as the next Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales.

Ms Waxman, who currently serves as London’s Independent Victims’ Commissioner, will take up her new role in January 2026, taking over from current Commissioner Baroness Helen Newlove.

The House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee published its report following its inquiry on prison culture: governance, leadership and staffing.

The report concluded that HM Prison and Probation Service is “inflexible, and overly bureaucratic. Whether it is fit for purpose remains to be proven”.

The House of Commons Justice Committee has opened an inquiry into access to justice.

The inquiry will consider how advice and legal services are adapting to secure access to justice across civil, criminal, and family law, and the impacts of the cyber-attack on the Legal Aid Agency.














The Committee’s call for evidence closes on 30 September 2025.

The Ministry of Justice published the annual performance ratings of prison establishments in England and Wales.

The report notes that 22 prisons were given a rating of serious concern, which is an increase of 7 prisons from 2023/24.

10. Annex: Glossary

Post-Brexit framework: key terms

International obligations		International duties and commitments of the UK
Trade agreements		Establish new trading arrangements between the UK and other countries
International agreements		Agreements between the UK and other countries or organisations
UK-EU Trade & Cooperation Agreement		Establishes the new UK-EU relationship
UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement		Sets the terms of the UK's exit from the EU
Protocol on Ireland-Northern Ireland		Part of the Withdrawal Agreement to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland
EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018		Converted EU law to domestic law, stops new EU laws having automatic effect in the UK and gives Ministers powers to correct the statute book after leaving the EU
EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020		Implements the Withdrawal Agreement
EU (Future Relationship) Act 2020		Implements the Trade & Cooperation Agreement
Internal Market Act 2020		Establishes rules for the regulation of goods, services and qualifications across the UK
Common Frameworks		Set up UK-wide frameworks for some areas previously governed by the EU
Implementing regulations		Regulations passed in the Senedd or UK Parliament to implement the new arrangements
Correcting regulations		Regulations passed in the Senedd or UK Parliament to make EU laws retained after leaving the EU workable in a domestic context

