

Rt Hon Jo Stevens MP  
Secretary of State for Wales

6 March 2025

Dear Jo,

### Laying of bilingual statutory instruments

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 2024, to which we have recently given further consideration as a Committee.

We are grateful to you for considering this matter, and acknowledge your recognition – and that of your department – of the importance in ensuring the accessibility of Welsh law in both languages.

We note that you highlight in your letter that the Chair of the House of Commons Procedure Committee has stated that no procedural bar exists to the laying of bilingual statutory instruments, but only in the circumstances in which the relevant Act requires it. Similarly to yourself, we are not aware of any statutory requirements that prescribe the language in which a statutory instrument is to be made; be that in English, or in any other language.

With this in mind, we do not agree with your assessment that, in the absence of any requirement, the “default position” should be that statutory instruments are to be laid in English only.

You will be aware that section 156 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006* provides that the English and Welsh texts of any subordinate legislation which is in both English and Welsh when it is made are to be treated for all purposes as being of equal standing. This provision extends to the whole of the United Kingdom and is not limited in application to subordinate legislation made by the Welsh Ministers and laid before the Senedd. In our assessment, this provision enables the making of bilingual statutory instruments, and their subsequent laying before the UK Parliament, without the need for the relevant Act to require as such. In this regard, we note that instruments containing Welsh language text are frequently laid in the UK Parliament, despite there being no requirement in the relevant enabling Acts to include Welsh language text.

We appreciate that your position in respect of this matter may differ to that of the Committee; however, given your recognition of the importance of ensuring the accessibility of Welsh law, we would be grateful if you could give further consideration to this matter, with particular regard to section 156 of the 2006 Act.

We would be interested to hear the outcome of that further consideration, and would be grateful to receive a response by 23 April 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mike Hedges  
Chair