

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Pontio Ewropeaidd
Counsel General and Minister for European Transition



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/CG/1756/20

Mick Antoniw MS
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

4 June 2020

Dear Mick,

I am very pleased that the remit of your Committee is now widened to include responsibility of the important matter of justice and I commend the Committee for seeking to get to work in the field so quickly by undertaking the inquiry on “Making Justice work in Wales”.

The Committee has set out very wide terms for this inquiry. Much of this ground was covered by the Commission on Justice in Wales, chaired by Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd and I trust that the Committee is not seeking to repeat the work of the Commission, which is authoritative and vast in its scope.

The conclusions of the Commission on Justice were clear and unequivocal, namely that the people of Wales are being let down by the justice system in its current state. The Welsh Government’s longstanding position is that the powers of the devolved institutions should be founded on a coherent set of responsibilities. Justice should be at the heart of government and aligned with policies that are already devolved to Wales. The Government agrees with the Commission’s view that major reform is needed to the justice system.

You will know that the First Minister moved quickly to respond to the Commission’s recommendation for clear and accountable leadership on justice in the Welsh Government and established a sub-committee of the Cabinet to provide Ministerial oversight for justice issues across government. Whilst progressing reform of the justice system is inevitably affected as we respond to the coronavirus pandemic, pursuing the objectives of the Commission’s report nevertheless remains a clear commitment of the Government. Furthermore, the pandemic has given greater prominence to devolution and in particular has highlighted the interdependencies between the Welsh Government’s responsibilities and those parts of the justice system that remain reserved.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

YPCCGB@llyw.cymru PSCGMET@gov.wales

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 correspondi ng in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

At this evidence gathering stage of your inquiry, I would draw the committee's attention to the following published evidence:

1. Welsh Government written evidence to the Commission on Justice in Wales.

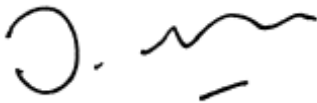
The Welsh Government submitted a suite of evidence to the Commission on Justice in Wales which set out the Government position in relation to Justice in Wales in detail.

Our evidence was published in a series of subject specific documents and they are available online. I have asked my officials to provide the committee clerk with links.

2. The First Minister's Oral Statement of 29 November 2019 and the associated record of proceedings.
3. The record of proceedings for the government led debate held on 4 February 2020

We will of course be happy to engage with the Committee further as you undertake part 2 of your inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

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