

Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS  
First Minister of Wales

19 June 2020

Dear Mark

**Inquiry into Making Justice work in Wales – data on access to justice**

You will be aware that we are undertaking an inquiry into making Justice work in Wales, and that this work follows on from the publication of the report of the Commission on Justice in Wales, and the Senedd's debate on that report in February of this year.

As you will know, the Justice Commission found that it was difficult to obtain disaggregated data on justice in Wales and noted that the Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice have agreed to 'establish a small working group to consider the user needs for Welsh justice data and how they could be met'. Further, we are aware that the joint UK Government – Welsh Government Justice in Wales Working Group recommended in 2017 that 'the Ministry of Justice should undertake a review of how its data collection and publishing practices reflect the distinctiveness of Wales, where possible disaggregating data to give a clear picture of how justice in Wales functions.'

It is important to our scrutiny function that we are able to understand how the UK Government and Welsh Government collect and use data on justice in Wales. At this stage we would be grateful to have more information from you on the Welsh Government's approach to managing data on access to justice, in particular changes in legal aid provision, numbers of unrepresented defendants, and court closures.

I am also writing to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, the Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, to seek information on the UK Government's approach to managing this data.



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We will shortly be having further discussions about our work programme, which will include deciding on future oral evidence sessions, and we will take into account the current virtual meeting model for Senedd Committees. It is likely that we will confirm our intention to invite you and the Counsel General to a future meeting as part of this inquiry, and I will ask the Clerk to liaise with your officials regarding your availability.

I am copying this letter to Jeremy Miles MS, the Counsel General.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mick Antoniw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mick Antoniw MS  
Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.  
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

