

Our ref: NB/MM

Ask for: Marilyn Morgan

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Rt Hon Mark Drakeford AM  
First Minister of Wales  
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**By email only**  
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Dear First Minister

I note the recent plenary debate and motion passed in the Senedd supporting a public inquiry into the response to the Coronavirus pandemic in Wales. During the course of the debate your Counsel General stated:

“This pandemic has affected all parts of the UK, and many decisions have been taken across the four nations. A great deal of the response to the pandemic has rightly been managed at a UK level and has involved many others alongside Governments, so it's important that there is a co-ordinated approach to the inquiry into the handling, by the UK Government, the devolved Governments and others. We would hope that could be achieved, but if not, then we would obviously accept an inquiry limited to events and actions in Wales.”

Whilst I do not doubt the challenge in ensuring a fully co-ordinated four nations approach, events and actions in Wales will inevitably include the full range of devolved functions impacted - not least health, social care, education, the Welsh language, economic development and local government services including homelessness.

As well as initial service failures any independent inquiry needs to capture positive innovations and cultural improvements as well.

An Inquiry in Wales could look at a range of issues which affect children, older people and affect justice, value for money, as well as the longer-term impacts on future generations – issues of relevance to the work plans of the Commissioners, PSOW, Audit Wales and other regulators.

Could I ask that key stakeholders are involved and consulted appropriately at an early stage in Wales about the devolved aspects of any inquiry, both its scope and terms of reference in order to provide a “framework” to allow other oversight bodies the ability to avoid duplication, and to also prioritise systemic and thematic investigations arising from the crisis?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Bennett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Bennett  
Ombudsman

cc: Chair, Finance Committee  
Auditor General for Wales  
Children’s Commissioner for Wales  
Future Generations Commissioner  
Older People’s Commissioner for Wales  
Welsh Language Commissioner