



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Intergovernmental Meeting**

DATE **28 October 2021**

BY **Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister**

The Minister for Health and Social Services and I represented the Welsh Government at a four-nations intergovernmental meeting on 18 October, chaired by the UK Government's Prime Minister, to discuss our shared challenges on Covid in context of wider winter pressures, and the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

A communique was published following the meeting:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-minister-led-engagement-with-the-devolved-administrations>

At the outset, the Prime Minister spoke about the tragic death of Sir David Amess. I echoed the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister and during the course of the meeting we observed a minute's silence.

During the agenda item on shared Covid challenges, I mentioned ongoing economic impacts and implications of supply chain shortages, noting impacts on sectors in Wales including the steel industry. I also highlighted labour shortages in the social care sector, and asked that social care workers should be added to the shortage occupation list to help address recruitment difficulties, noting that in the long-term, the governments will need to work together on recruitment and retention in the NHS and in social care. I called for ongoing four-nations collaboration on vaccines and testing, and that surveillance measures for returning travellers continue to be vital to protect Wales.

I pressed the Prime Minister for a guarantee the UK-wide Covid public inquiry would examine the actions of the Welsh Government and the experiences of the people of Wales. In response, the Prime Minister confirmed there will be a proper Welsh dimension to the inquiry and spoke of the importance of the inquiry to the whole of the UK. I also received assurances that Welsh Ministers will be consulted on the terms of reference for the inquiry. As I have made clear, the inquiry must take account of the actions taken in Wales and

provide proper investigation to offer the answers that families are entitled to have about the way that decisions were made on their behalf.

In relation to the item on COP26, in the context of a changing climate, I called on the UK Government through its forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review to provide additional funding to deal with the pre-devolution legacy of coal tips and to ensure they are safe as we face increasing extreme weather as a result of climate change. It is now a critical issue with a tragic history which poses real risks – which climate change is exacerbating – for people and communities across Wales. Those communities whose efforts created huge wealth and economic benefit to the UK in centuries past have a right to look to the UK for long-term funding to deal with these sites.