



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

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Huw,

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Thank you very much for your letter of 4 November regarding Government legislation that includes devolved matters. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I would like to reiterate that I appreciate the work your committee puts into scrutinising that legislation and I recognise the importance of there being appropriate time available for your committee, and others, to carry out that work thoroughly.

As you note, my officials provide extensive guidance and support to bill teams across UK Government regarding engagement with officials in the Welsh Government. The information contained in the Devolution Guidance Notes certainly informs that work, as does the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and devolved administrations, and the Guide to Making Legislation. Guidance and support is then adapted to the specific circumstances of each bill and, where relevant, would cover how to handle proposed amendments.

As you will know from your own work in the Senedd, legislation timetabling is often subject to change and must be managed carefully alongside other demands on the legislatures' time. My officials are not responsible for scheduling a bill's passage through Parliament. They do, however, offer advice on how to handle bill timings in the context of engaging with the devolved administrations.

You also asked about the circumstances in which the Government would include devolved matters within its legislation. The content of UK Government legislation is determined according to policy priorities and bills can touch on devolved matters to create consistent UK wide legislation in line with those priorities. You are right, of course, that including devolved matters within a UK Government bill potentially frees up time for the devolved legislatures, as this means the devolved administrations will not need to progress their own legislation on the same matter. Whilst not the primary aim of Government legislation, we recognise this can be an important secondary benefit and are open to engagement on this with the Welsh Government. UK-wide legislation, rather than separate legislation affecting each of the home nations, can of course also improve the simplicity of the legislative 'landscape' across the UK, aiding business and citizens. But we recognise that this is not always possible or desirable.

Any legislation which includes devolved matters would of course be subject to the Sewel Convention and the Government is fully committed to both that Convention and the associated practices for seeking consent. These processes necessarily involve communication between the two governments and any ministerial or official correspondence would be subject to the usual rules which the UK and Welsh Governments follow in relation to releasing information.

The Government will continue to work with colleagues in the Welsh Government on legislation where it affects devolved matters.

Thank you again for your correspondence.

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M. Gove



RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP

**Secretary of State for Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations**