



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE** Welsh Government position on the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill

**DATE** 03 February 2023

**BY** Mick Antoniw, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution

The UK Government introduced the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill on 10 January, the Bill passed its second reading on 16 January and completed its passage through the House of Commons on 30 January. It has done so without a published impact assessment to enable proper scrutiny. The First Minister wrote to the UK Government on 16 January setting out the Welsh Government's position and [we are publishing that letter today](#).

The Welsh Government is opposed to this damaging and unnecessary Bill. Damaging, because the Bill is rushed, lacks detail, and interferes with devolved public services. Unnecessary, because the Bill is an attack on workers' rights and trade unions and will do nothing to resolve industrial disputes. There is a risk that this legislation will make strike action more likely rather than less as the space for good faith negotiations are undermined.

A number of devolved public services for which Welsh Ministers are responsible and accountable are in scope of the Bill. If passed, the Bill will provide a UK Minister with sweeping powers to make regulations which set minimum service levels during strikes in areas that are considered to be fully devolved – such as health and education. UK Ministers should not be able to exercise such powers over services over which they have no electoral mandate. Welsh Ministers are responsible for the strategic oversight of these services and are accountable to the Senedd for the decisions they take in exercising their powers. UK Ministers have no role in these decisions and are entirely divorced from the strategic and operational functions this Bill directly interferes with. This reckless encroachment into devolved areas of responsibility is dismissive of these concerns.

There was no consultation prior to the publication of the Bill either with the Welsh Government or with trade unions and employers. The first discussions with the Welsh Government took place on the same day that UK Ministers issued a press release announcing their intentions. This lack of engagement in advance of the introduction of the Bill is unacceptable and was wholly avoidable.

We are exploring all of our options to protect Wales and our devolved public services from the harmful and serious consequences of this pernicious Bill. We will be making further public statements on our position in the coming weeks, and we will continue to keep Senedd Members informed.