



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Preparing for devolution of justice**

DATE **25 April 2023**

BY **Mick Antoniw, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution
and Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice**

Today we wish to provide Members with an update on some steps the Welsh Government is taking to prepare for the potential devolution of justice to Wales.

We are commissioning a range of work in the spheres of youth justice and probation to understand how the devolution of these areas could happen in practice and how we could maximise the positive impact of devolving these services to Wales.

On youth justice, we have commissioned Dr Jonathan Evans, recently retired Professor of Youth Justice Policy and Practice at the University of South Wales, to lead an informal review of the current Youth Justice system in Wales, considering the opportunities that arise from devolution and to assess what the next practical steps towards devolution might be. Dr Evans is being supported in his work by the Wales Youth Justice Academic Advisory Group consisting of academics and those with practitioner experience across Wales.

On probation, we are seeking to take forward a focussed piece of research on the practical steps needed to make the devolution of probation a reality. This will complement the work that is being taken forward by the Probation Development Group, a group of academics and those with operational probation experience, under the auspices of the Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice, on exploring best practice in relation to probation and reducing reoffending and identifying some of the potential opportunities arising from devolution of probation in Wales.

Beyond this work, policing is another area where devolution has been advocated as long ago as the Silk Commission, and the Senedd voted in favour of devolution of policing last March. Pursuing the case for the devolution of policing is a specific Programme for Government commitment, and our intention is that we will also take forward work in this area.

Given the importance of this work, and ensuring that it is aligned, it is important there is expert support and scrutiny across the range of our plans. As part of that, we have

appointed Dame Vera Baird KC to take on a role as an Independent Expert Adviser to the Welsh Government on Justice Devolution.

This programme of work, along with our continuing internal work, will lead to a wide range of insights and learning which will help us to understand how to make devolution in these areas a practical and positive reality.

We will keep members informed of progress, including through an oral statement in due course.