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Dear Jenny,

**Re: Strengthening and Advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales**

Thank you for your letter of the 15th of October seeking an update regarding the recommendations of the SAEHR Report.

As an England and Wales organisation, The Law Society takes human rights very seriously and undertakes a wide range of work that both supports and promotes human rights, both in the UK and abroad. Below are a few examples of our work on human rights over the last 12 months. Further details of this work can be accessed by clicking on the links.

- [Rwanda asylum partnership](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Illegal Migration Act](#)

As the Wales office of The Law Society, and as the wider organisational work above proves, we very much support the overarching aims and principles set out in the SAEHR report and we are very happy to be involved in discussions with Welsh Government and the numerous other wider stakeholders who have an interest in human rights in Wales.

However, as was repeatedly pointed out to Professor Simon Hoffman and Dr Sarah Nason, the authors of the SAEHR report, at the point the final draft was circulated to us for comment, the Wales Office of The Law Society have neither the staffing resource, finances or human rights expertise within the team to be in a leadership position to drive a strengthening of relationships and increased and ongoing collaboration with Welsh Government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Future Generations Commissioner around the human rights agenda.

Any such Law Society Wales office based human rights work programme, which would be separate from and in addition to the work undertaken in London and our already set and budgeted local priorities and work programme, would place a significantly increased burden of work on a Wales office that consists of only four members of staff.

We worked closely and collaboratively with Welsh Government officials to ensure our request to the report authors that the recommendation that specifically mentions The Law Society should be amended to reflect this.

As a result, Welsh Government very kindly arranged a meeting between myself and the report authors where I set out my reasons for seeking the change to the recommendation.

The reasoning behind asking for the specific naming of The Law Society Wales office to be withdrawn at the draft stage were as set out below: -

1. The Law Society Wales office is a part of a wider independent organisation that receives no public funding in Wales and is of limited staff capacity.
2. As the Wales office of an independent organisation, we set our own priorities and work programme according to the needs and views of our members in Wales and in accordance with the wider organisational business plan. These priorities are ours and ours alone to set and resource and are not for the report authors or any other external agency to dictate.
3. We do not feel it is right, or within the purview of the SAEHR report authors to specifically name us, alongside Welsh Government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Future Generations Commissioner as a body that should have a specific responsibility for driving this advancement In Wales, whilst several other organisations who may also have a significant role and interest are not specifically named.
4. This is a matter that would benefit from contributions from the whole of the legal sector, including the Bar Council, university law schools, other legal education and training providers, and it should be driven and guided by those organisations with specific responsibilities in the area of human rights such as the EHRC, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and potentially Public Law Wales.
5. Following several attempts at explanation, the authors of the SAEHR report appear to have misunderstood the role, function, remit and capacity of The Law Society's work in Wales, as part of and within the wider Law Society organisation. In fact, the report refers several times to "The Law Society of Wales," an organisation that does not exist.

As an organisation we fully and actively support the strengthening and advancing of equality and human rights in many territories, including Wales and we are very happy to play our part in any future multi-agency discussions and programmes around how we can all contribute to that as a goal. However, as of today we have received no communication from either the Equality and Human Rights Commission or the Future Generations Commissioner in relation to any work that is being developed in this area.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Davies

**Head of Wales, The Law Society**