

**Y Pwyllgor Deddfwriaeth,
Cyfiawnder a'r Cyfansoddiad**

—
**Legislation, Justice and
Constitution Committee**

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Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Welsh Government

Julie James MS

Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

Welsh Government

12 December 2025

Dear both,

The Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026-27 - Justice

We note your [letter](#) of 17 November 2025, providing further information about the Welsh Government's draft budget plans for justice, to support the aims of advancing the devolution of justice and reforming the Welsh Tribunals.

Please find the Committee's observations on your response below.

Overall Justice budget

The Committee remains disappointed with the information received on justice-related spending, which, as with last year's budget, remains less comprehensive than in previous years. Whilst we acknowledge the issues posed by disaggregating the figures, we feel that there is insufficient information available to allow us to meaningfully scrutinise the allocation in this crucial field.

In our [report](#) on the Draft Budget for 2025-26, we recommended that the Welsh Government should "set out the work it has undertaken to date to explore the ways in which it can improve the level of information it provides about expenditure on justice-related activity, and the work it intends to take in the future in this area".

In your [response](#), you accepted the recommendation and provided some information.

It is regrettable that there does not appear to have been much in the way of progress such that your position appears to remain unchanged, with very little by way of granular information provided. We hope that this position will change in future in the interests of openness and transparency.

Our disappointment at the approach being adopted to identifying spending on justice-related activity was noted in the Committee's [Annual Report for 2024/25](#).

Delivering Justice for Wales

We welcome the additional details provided on programmes being delivered in relation to this programme. We note that there is no planned joint justice spending with the Ministry of Justice for 2026-27.

The Welsh Tribunals

We note the modest additional revenue funding allocated to the Welsh Tribunals service, along with the £350k of capital funding for a new case management system, as well as the revenue funding to support this transition. The President of the Welsh Tribunals **told** the Committee earlier this week that he was "delighted" with the funding for a case management system and noted it would provide the service with the means to:

" (...) monitor our work, to deal with our work more efficiently, and also to obtain data that would enable us, going forward, to have a much better handle on our work and how best it can be dealt with."

The Committee has raised concerns about the delay in presenting a Bill to reform the Welsh Tribunals service, a Bill which the President of the Tribunals describes as "vital to the progress of an efficient and effective justice system in Wales". In our evidence session he told us that the delay was unfortunate and it is unclear to us how allocations in the Draft Budget are helping the Welsh Tribunals prepare for any future reform.

Accessibility of Welsh law

As with our overall point on the disaggregation of the Justice budget, we are disappointed that you have not provided further information on allocations to support the aim of improving the accessibility of Welsh law. In our report on the Draft Budget for 2025-26, we asked for an explanation about the lack of details on the planned spending in this area, which was provided. It's regrettable that we're again in the same position.

Conclusion

In our Annual Report for 2024/25 we expressed disappointment that it appears that the Welsh Government has deprioritised work on justice matters in the last 12 months.

The approach we believe the Welsh Government is now taking in relation to identifying spending on justice-related matters is symptomatic of that de-prioritisation we have identified.

The Welsh Government should reflect on its approach to disaggregating spending on justice, as there is insufficient information available to the Committee to support meaningful scrutiny on this important policy area.

We would welcome a response to this letter by 28 January 2026.

I am copying this letter to Peredur Griffiths MS, Chair of the Finance Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mike Hedges

Chair