



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee – 17 February 2026**

DATE **2 March 2026**

BY **Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**

I represented the Welsh Government at the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee (IMSC) held on 17 February 2026.

The meeting was chaired by The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP, Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations. A joint communique containing full details of other attendees will be published in due course [here](#). Items discussed included election security and the Covid-19 Inquiry Module 2.

I welcomed the collaborative approach to election security, including the extension of Operation Ford protections to all Senedd Members and candidates. Noting our involvement in the Defending Democracy Taskforce, which the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip will be attending in March, I also referred to the alignment of our resilience structures with UK arrangements.

Our close work with the Electoral Commission, policing partners and the Electoral Management Board for Wales ahead of the May elections was also emphasised. I welcomed the Philip Rycroft review into foreign interference and the publication of the Representation of the People Bill on 12 February, including the proposed provisions to address foreign interference and the abuse of candidates and electoral staff. I advised that work is underway on the Bill's application to Wales and the associated legislative consent requirements and emphasised the importance of the UK Government remaining mindful of the timing of Senedd dissolution.

On the Covid-19 Inquiry Module 2, I noted that the Welsh Government intends to publish its response on 16 March, ahead of the Senedd elections. Addressing the intergovernmental relations recommendations, I outlined that our aim is to secure effective four nation collaboration while fully respecting the devolution settlements. This requires decision-making structures that support proper discussion and consensus where appropriate, while ensuring that decisions on devolved matters remain with devolved governments.

Due to time constraints, the legislative consent and development of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Sewel Convention agenda item was not covered during the meeting. I have therefore subsequently written to the UK Government to set out the Welsh Government's established position, namely that statutory underpinning and strengthening of the Convention would offer critical safeguards for devolution. In doing so, I noted that the UK Government's manifesto commitment to strengthening the Sewel Convention through a Memorandum of Understanding could represent a constructive step in the right direction.

In my correspondence, I have sought assurances on the UK Government's approach to the forthcoming King's Speech, in particular to ensure that the timing of the Senedd election and the preceding period of recess and dissolution is taken into account. This includes ensuring that the Sewel Convention is respected as the current UK legislative programme is completed, and the importance of careful planning and early information-sharing to enable appropriate engagement before and after the King's Speech.

The next meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee is expected to be in summer 2026 and will be chaired by the Northern Ireland Executive.