



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**            **The Welsh Government response to the President of Welsh Tribunals Sixth Annual Report 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

**DATE**            **12 March 2026**

**BY**                **Julie James MS, Counsel General and Minister for Delivery**

The [President of Welsh Tribunals published his Sixth Annual Report](#) in August 2025, detailing the operations, workload and priorities of the Welsh Tribunals for the financial year 2024-25. As with previous years, through the annual report the President represents the views of members of the Welsh Tribunals to the Welsh Ministers and the Senedd. I therefore laid the report before the Senedd in October last year.

Unfortunately, given exceptional pressures on Senedd business this term - including the passage of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales (Membership) Act 2026 under emergency procedures - it has not been possible to schedule a Government led plenary debate on the report before dissolution, as has been done in previous years. A Written Statement therefore ensures that the Government's response is placed on the public record before the end of this current Senedd. I also welcome the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee's scrutiny of the report in December 2025.

Before responding to matters highlighted in the report, I would firstly, like to reiterate the Welsh Government's appreciation of the leadership of Sir Gary Hickinbottom as President of Welsh Tribunals. Sir Gary's commitment to the effective operation of the devolved justice system and to optimising the performance of all our tribunals is clear from his report. His pragmatic approach is central to the effective delivery of justice for the people of Wales and to maintaining constructive and collaborative relationships with the Welsh Government.

The President has highlighted a number of key matters in the report, to which I respond as follows:

### **Budget**

I and my predecessors have had constructive discussions with the President about the budget for the tribunal service. The recalibration of tribunal service budget allocations in 2024/25 to reflect pressures on running costs has strengthened financial management for

the current and future financial years. We remain committed to supporting an effective, efficient and independent user-focused tribunal service.

### **Tribunal reform programme**

The President's continued support for the tribunal reform agenda is welcomed. However, I acknowledge his disappointment regarding the absence of a Tribunals Bill in the current Senedd term. There was much competition for space in the legislative programme for the final year of the Senedd, and we have had to make some difficult choices. We are committed to taking forward tribunal reform and work on drafting a Bill continues and is well advanced.

I am confident the support for tribunal reform across the current Senedd will continue in the next, and that the new Welsh Government will consider a Bill for introduction.

### **Judicial training**

The President has outlined the challenges to maintaining arrangements for judicial training for members of the Welsh Tribunals. Those challenges arise primarily from the relatively small cohort of tribunal members and the defined remit of the Judicial College which limits the availability of training for members of the Welsh Tribunals. I welcome the actions taken by the President to appoint a Training Lead Judge and to strengthen the mechanisms for identifying training needs. Engagement with the Judicial College to explore support for Welsh Tribunals members is also a positive development, and I note the President's comments that the College is willing to assist as much as it can.

### **Diversity**

I note and support the ongoing work to collect and analyse diversity data on Welsh Tribunals' case panels. This is an important step towards improving understanding of tribunal composition and informing any future action.

### **Welsh Language**

I support the continued efforts to increase the use of the Welsh language in tribunal proceedings, including encouraging bilingual hearings to facilitate and support tribunal users who wish to use Welsh.

Finally, although not addressed in the report, I would also like to acknowledge the collaboration, advice and support of the President of Welsh Tribunals and the President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales during the passage of the Mental Health Tribunal (Membership) Act 2026. Their leadership and commitment ensured the continuing operation of that tribunal in challenging circumstances. I am grateful for the dedication shown by all members across the Welsh Tribunals to public service and to the maintenance of access to justice for the people of Wales.