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Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mike Hedges MS
Chair of the Legislation, Justice
and Constitution Committee
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17 December 2025

Dear Mike,

I am writing to you in accordance with the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement, to inform you that the fourth meeting, and the second under the current UK Government, of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Justice took place online, on Thursday 11 December.

The meeting was hosted by the Welsh Government and I served as chair for the session. Jake Richards MP, Minister for Sentencing, Youth Justice and International Justice attended for the UK Government. Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, represented Scotland, and Naomi Long, Minister of Justice, joined from the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip was also present, as issues relating to the agenda item on violence against women and girls fall within her portfolio.

A communiqué summarising the proceedings of the meeting will be published on the [.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website in due course. The agenda facilitated substantive discussions on several topics, including digital innovation and strategy, violence against women and girls, and court caseloads. Additionally, two supplementary papers addressing prison capacity and legal aid were circulated for informational purposes, providing further context for thorough consideration of the issues highlighted above.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

During the discussion on digital innovation and strategy, I identified my hope that new technology will be able to help with the drafting of legislation, including consequential amendments. I also expressed my support for the roll-out of the Transcribe Justice pilot to Wales in January 2026 whilst confirming the need for human checking of the accuracy of its output. I cautioned that the increasing reliance on technology in the justice system must always be seen against the background of the Post Office miscarriages of justice.

As the minister responsible for violence against women, domestic violence and sexual violence (VAWDASV), the Cabinet Secretary provided an update on the position in Wales, highlighting limitations in devolved powers and the need for close collaboration with UK departments and the police through the Blueprint Approach. The Cabinet Secretary advised that a summit was held in September to address women and girls' safety, and that the national advisor was reappointed. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed that the Welsh Government's VAWDASV strategy is under review, with updates to address technology and online harms and confirmed that the Welsh Government is awaiting the UK Government's own violence against women and girls strategy. She confirmed that ongoing collaboration between the two governments is essential particularly given the announcement of the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales. Finally, the Cabinet Secretary confirmed that she is waiting for the UK Government's response to recommendations from Part 2 of the Angiolini inquiry into sexually motivated crimes.

Under this item, I raised concerns about women within the criminal justice system in Wales, noting that there are no female prisons in Wales, and I queried progress with the Women's Residential Centre in Swansea.

During the conversation on court caseloads I stressed the need for improved and meaningful engagement from the UK Government before such announcements are made, making the point that court backlogs in Wales are significantly lower than they are in England and therefore the rationale for removal of the right to elect trial by jury identified by the UK Government is not valid for Wales. I expressed reservations about the direction indicated in the initial response to Part 1 of the Leveson report, noting a continued need for discussion on Welsh-specific issues arising, and also highlighted that our courts across Wales need critical investment in repairs and maintenance.

I am copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

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