

Mr William Wragg MP, Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs
Committee, House of Commons
The Baroness Drake CBE, Chair, Constitution Committee, House of Lords
Ms Clare Adamson, Convener, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture
Committee, Scottish Parliament

20 July 2022

Dear colleagues,

Intergovernmental relations: proposals for UK Bills to legislate in devolved areas

Please find attached a letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding intergovernmental relations. The letter highlights several areas we are seeking clarification on following discussions during our Committee meeting on the 4 July 2022. We will keep you informed of further developments.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Irranca-Davies

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Chair

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities

20 July 2022

Dear Greg

Intergovernmental relations: proposals for UK Bills to legislate in devolved areas

As you will be aware, the UK Government and Devolved Governments reached agreement on the outcome of the Intergovernmental Relations Review earlier this year.

We welcomed the outcome as a positive step forward, as it would likely result in a more co-operative approach between governments. We also noted **correspondence** from the Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP, the former Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, who spoke of the new intergovernmental arrangements heralding a new era for joint working between the UK and Devolved Governments and the UK Government's "ambition to work with the Devolved Governments at a much earlier stage" where matters of legislative consent are concerned.

We accept that new arrangements will take time to bed in and note that progress is already being made, with various interministerial committees set up and meetings already held.

Nevertheless, we are aware of concerns regarding cooperation on UK Government Bills that make provision in devolved areas. On 17 June the Counsel General **wrote** to us saying that in some instances, the current UK Government does not share any information on Bills prior to their introduction. Correspondence from the Welsh Ministers that we considered at our meeting on 4 July has confirmed this to be the case for a number of UK Government Bills including the **Social Housing Regulation Bill**, the **Northern Ireland Protocol Bill**, the **Genetic Technologies (Precision**



Breeding) Bill and the **Bill of Rights Bill**. Furthermore, a Welsh Government **Written Statement** also highlighted concerns linked to a Bill on retained EU law.

This correspondence, and the Written Statement, make for disappointing reading and suggest a less than satisfactory start to the new intergovernmental approach in some areas.

We would therefore be grateful if you could explain how the UK Government will look to ensure that this does not continue to happen in relation to any future UK Government Bills that make provision in devolved areas and if you would commit to drawing our concerns to the attention of UK Government departments.

We would also find it helpful to understand what processes are followed when the UK Government decides to legislate in a devolved area including:

- at what stage in the process UK Government departments are required to initiate discussions with the Welsh Government;
- the timetabling information that is provided to help the Welsh Government consider the proposals including final legislative drafts; and
- at what point in the process the Welsh Government is engaged on the preparation of government amendments and the notice period given before amendments are tabled.

I would be grateful to receive a response by 5 September 2022.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Wales, the Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office, the First Minister of Wales and the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution of the Welsh Government.

I am also drawing it to the attention of other parliamentary Committees in the other nations of the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely,



Huw Irranca-Davies

Chair