



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales: progress report - July 2023

Progress report submitted to the First Minister, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, and the Leader of Plaid Cymru.

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Contents

[Background](#)

[Progress](#)

[Engagement](#)

[Reporting](#)

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Background

The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales has been established by the Welsh Government with 2 broad objectives:

1. To consider and develop options for fundamental reform of the constitutional structures of the United Kingdom, in which Wales remains an integral part.
2. To consider and develop all progressive principal options to strengthen Welsh democracy and deliver improvements for the people of Wales.

The commission membership comprises:

- Co-chair: Laura McAllister
- Co-chair: Rowan Williams
- Anwen Elias
- Miguela Gonzalez
- Michael Marmot
- Lauren McEvatt
- Albert Owen
- Philip Rycroft
- Shavanah Taj
- Kirsty Williams
- Leanne Wood

The commission is supported by an expert panel, which provides advice on a range of specialisms:

- Chair: Gareth Williams, former Special Adviser to the Welsh Government on European Transition
- Jess Blair, Director of the Electoral Reform Society Cymru
- Professor Emyr Lewis, Head of Department of Law and Criminology at Aberystwyth University

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- Auriol Miller, Director of the Institute of Welsh Affairs
- Akash Paun, Head of Institute for Government's devolution programme
- Dr Hugh Rawlings, former Director of Constitutional affairs at the Welsh Government
- Professor Mairi Spowage, Professor of Practice and Director of the Fraser of Allander Institute
- Professor Diana Stirbu, Professor of Policy and Governance at London Met University

Progress

Since the previous progress report, the commission has held two evidence sessions, and a workshop on participatory and deliberative democracy. A further evidence session was held by the commission's Subgroup on Justice.

In evidence meetings, the commission has heard from:

- Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General for Wales
- Jeff Cuthbert, Police and Crime Commission for Gwent and Chair of Policing in Wales
- Rt Hon David TC Davies MP, Secretary of State for Wales
- Andy Dunbobbin, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales
- Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Local Government and Finance
- Chris Llewelyn, WLGA Chief Executive
- Alun Michael, Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales
- Cllr Llinos Medi, WLGA Plaid Group Leader & Leader of Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Cllr Mark Pritchard, WLGA Independent Group Leader & Leader of Wrexham Borough Council

The Subgroup on Justice has heard from:

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- Jonathan Davies, Head of Wales, Law Society
- Mark Davies, Chair Law Society National Board for Wales
- Joshua Hurst, Public Affairs & Policy Manager Wales
- Dafydd Llywelyn, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys
- David McNeill, Director of Public Affairs and Campaigns, Law Society

The contributors to the workshop on participatory and deliberative democracy were:

- Prof Oliver Escobar, University of Edinburgh
- Auriol Miller, Director of Institute of Welsh Affairs
- Dr Christoph Niessen, Leiden University
- Prof Diana Stirbu, London Metropolitan University
- Dr Matt Wall, Swansea University
- Welsh Government official

The commission's Subgroup on Employment has received written evidence from the Institute of Directors, Make UK, and the Federation of Small Businesses.

Engagement

The commission's programme of engagement events for citizens has continued with meetings in Abergavenny, Aberystwyth, Caernarfon, Cardiff, Newtown, Pembroke Dock, Trehafod, and Wrexham.

The Secretariat engaged with WLGA members across the 22 local authorities to raise awareness of the commission's engagement ambitions and invite the local authorities to recommend communities for engagement. The summer roadshow has started with visits to the Urdd Festival, as well as central locations at Haverfordwest and Blackwood, and will run until September. Commissioners have taken part at an event in Hay Festival, the WI annual conference, the

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WISERD annual conference and a digital Q&A on Facebook live.

The commission met with members of the House of Lords and House of Commons in a cross-party event at Westminster, and the Co-chairs have appeared before the Welsh Affairs Committee. The co-chairs met Senedd Members from all parties at a drop-in event in Y Cwrt during which they discussed the work of the commission and how Senedd Members can encourage constituents to have their say.

The commission's engagement platform useyourvoice.wales was launched in April, and has been developed as a result of feedback from engagement work, asking for simple, bitesize information to explain the status quo, the options and governance in Wales more generally. A new survey was published on the site asking citizens questions about the 3 options. Since its launch, the English site has had over 5200 views and 383 responses to the survey. The Welsh site has had 503 views and 4 responses to the survey.

Reporting

The commission is due to publish its final report, including recommendations, by the end of 2023.

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