

**Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Mark Drakeford AS/MS**  
**Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Rt Hon Boris Johnson  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

[REDACTED]

11 May 2021

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter and telephone call on 8 May.

I would be pleased to take part in a meeting with you and the First Ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland to take stock of and discuss a collective approach to Covid recovery. However, following the elections in Wales and in Scotland, our dialogue should have a broader agenda, including a comprehensive reset of intergovernmental relations.

There are many issues for our four governments to discuss, including the operation of the UK Internal Market Act and the Intergovernmental Relations Review. Both affect devolved responsibilities and relationships between the four nations of the UK, and I deal with them in turn below.

The UK Internal Market Act is an unacceptable and unconstitutional encroachment into the established devolution settlement. A properly satisfactory and durable working relationship depends on a change of direction in this regard.

The financial assistance powers in the Act, in particular, are being deployed to usurp the functions that sit clearly within the competence of the Senedd and the Welsh Government. These should only be used in a way, which has been agreed with the Welsh Government. For one administration in the UK to seek to reclaim powers voted for by the people of Wales, and enshrined in successive Government of Wales Acts, is simply unacceptable.

This is especially important to the development of the new investment framework for the Shared Prosperity Fund. This is an opportunity to make an unequivocal commitment to co-decision the use of funding under this framework with the devolved governments.

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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.

You will be aware of the lengthy and detailed discussions, which have produced a series of Common Frameworks in key policy areas. It would be a strong affirmation of the UK Government's commitment to such joint efforts if the market access processes set out in Parts 1 to 3 of the Internal Market Act were explicitly to be reserved for only those areas where Common Frameworks cannot be agreed.

The position with regard to the Intergovernmental Relations Review is, in principle, much more positive, but it urgently needs to be brought to a conclusion, which delivers fair and tangible results for us to build on in the future.

If these matters can be resolved, I am confident we can find new ways of working co-operatively. Governments will clearly disagree on some issues but we ought to be capable of working together to demonstrate to our citizens the value of collaboration between governments in a strong union, based on partnership and respect.

Last week's Senedd elections gave my party a clear mandate to speak for Wales. The electorate voted overwhelmingly for parties, which support the maintenance and strengthening of the powers of the Senedd. For my part, I want to work constructively with the UK Government to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Wales.

It is my belief we are now at a critical point for relations between the Welsh and UK governments, and for the United Kingdom as a whole.

Too often in the last year, "muscular Unionism" has found its expression in aggressively unilateral actions by the UK Government. In that direction lies the strengthening of separatist sentiment and the further fracturing of already fragile relationships.

Now is the moment to do things differently and to demonstrate – rather than simply assert – that there are new and better ways of securing a meaningful future for our voluntary association of four nations.

I hope we can make rapid and significant progress on the issues I have outlined above. If we are unable to, then I want to be clear that the new government I lead will be robust in continuing to defend the settlement, which people in Wales have repeatedly endorsed. I am copying this letter to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of State for Wales, the First Minister of Scotland and the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**