



Priorities for justice in Wales

National Assembly for Wales Election 2016





PRIORITIES FOR JUSTICE IN WALES

The Law Society is committed to ensuring effective access to justice in Wales. We work with solicitors and stakeholders to develop legal services and access to those services. In the new Assembly, the Law Society will build on our activity in these areas which we prioritise:

The laws of Wales

The Law Society has a public interest role to engage ministers and legislators to seek improvements in the way the law is made and in its accessibility, from preliminary and consultation stages to publication and implementation.

The Law Commission project on the law in Wales will report in the spring. There are many factors linked to how the law of Wales is made and made available which the report will address. The Law Society calls on the new Welsh government to take a proactive role in the development and accessibility of the laws of Wales.

Devolved justice functions

Where justice functions are devolved engagement with users should be a priority.

The Law Society in Wales works collaboratively with the Welsh government and its agencies in the justice sector at a strategic level.

The next Welsh government should:

- develop formal and permanent lines of engagement across the justice sector in Wales
- appoint a senior president of tribunals in Wales to lead the devolved tribunals service
- retain the Committee for Administrative Justice and Tribunals Wales

Engagement with the justice sector

A permanent ministerial stakeholder group for the justice sector should be established to develop a forum for debate about current issues, developments and strategy. As Wales' justice sector evolves those working in it need to have a formal channel to contribute.

Affordable access to legal advice is a basic right for everyone. The National Advice Network will provide a strategic approach to the provision of social welfare advice and its implementation will be a significant benefit for communities across Wales. The new Welsh government should continue to support this initiative.

Engagement with UK government

An effective relationship with the UK Ministry of Justice is vital for the future of the law in Wales. Areas which affect Wales such as HM Courts and Tribunals Service and access to legal aid sit within the remit of the Ministry of Justice. The policies of the department and their implementation, such as the recent decision to close 10 courts in Wales, should reflect Welsh circumstances. It is only through the new Welsh government being proactive and developing its communication with the Ministry of Justice that London-based decision makers will understand and respond to the distinct needs of Wales.

Welsh in the law

Access to justice should not be affected by language. Welsh is an official language: for individuals and business there should be no impact on their experience of access to justice.

Economy

More than 3,700 qualified solicitors practise in Wales and over 8,000 people are employed across the legal sector.



Solicitors provide professional legal advice and representation which contribute to the well-being of individuals, business and the wider state.



The new Welsh government should continue to recognise the legal sector as a key driver of the Welsh economy.





Cymdeithas y Cyfreithwyr
The Law Society

Solicitors:

contributing to society and the economy in Wales

Cyfreithwyr:

cyfrannu i gymdeithas a'r economi yng Nghymru

For further information contact:

Lowri Morgan

Head of Wales

lowri.morgan@lawsociety.org.uk

Kay Powell

Policy adviser

kay.powell@lawsociety.org.uk

Rhys Jones

Development executive

rhys.jones@lawsociety.org.uk

Law Society Wales Office

Capital Tower

Greyfriars Road

Cardiff CF10 3AG

Tel: 029 2064 5254

www.lawsociety.org.uk

 **[@TheLawSociety](https://twitter.com/TheLawSociety)**

© 2016 The Law Society. All rights reserved. April 2016. Designed by DTW