



Tribiwnlysoedd Cymru
Welsh Tribunals

Llywydd / President

To:

Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

26 January 2023

Dear Mr Huw Irranca-Davies


FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF WELSH TRIBUNALS

I am pleased to send you my Fourth and final Annual Report. It covers the financial year 2021/2022 and also the period between April 2022 and 31 December 2022.

It has been an honour to have served as the first President of Welsh Tribunals and I will follow the further development of the devolved tribunal system in Wales with considerable interest.

Yours sincerely

SIR WYN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT OF WELSH TRIBUNALS



President of Welsh Tribunals Fourth Annual Report April 2021 to December 2022

11 January 2023



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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2	Updates upon the Third Annual Report	4
3	The Law Commission report on the Welsh Tribunals	6
4	Thanks and reflections	10

1. Introduction

1.1 This is my fourth and last Annual Report. On 31 March 2023 I will retire from the role of President of Welsh Tribunals having held the role since July 2017. On 1 April 2023 Sir Gary Hickinbottom will become President. I am delighted to be succeeded by a distinguished former judge of the Court of Appeal of Wales and England. I know Sir Gary very well; we have been judicial colleagues for 20 years or thereabouts. He is dynamic and innovative and has Wales very close to his heart.

1.2 My Third Annual Report covered the year ending 31 March 2021, although it was not published until October 2021. I have deliberately delayed publishing my Fourth Report until close to my retirement date so as to avoid the need to write yet a further report after I have retired. If any event occurs or decision of consequence is made in the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 no doubt it will be noted and, if necessary, discussed in the First Annual Report published by Sir Gary.

1.3 In my First Annual Report I explained that one of the statutory duties imposed upon the President of Welsh Tribunals by the Wales Act 2017 was to represent the views of members of the Welsh Tribunals to the Welsh Ministers and to members of the (then) National Assembly for Wales. Following consultation with the First Minister and Counsel General I decided that I would discharge that duty by producing an annual report which would be presented to the First Minister and the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly. I hope that my annual reports to the First Minister and the Llywydd thus far have discharged that duty. I hope, too, that they have also fulfilled a much wider function, namely to provide a reasonably detailed and transparent account of how the Welsh Tribunals have operated over the last 5 years or so.

1.4 I am sure that readers of this report will be familiar with the tribunals which are known collectively as “the Welsh Tribunals”. For the avoidance of any doubt, however, I set them out as they are referred to in the Wales Act 2017, as amended, together with the acronyms that are often used for shorthand identification of each tribunal.

Section 59 of the Wales Act 2017 defines the phrase ‘Welsh Tribunal’ to mean:

- (a) the Agricultural Land Tribunal for Wales/Tribiwnlys Tir Amaethyddol Cymru (“ALTW”);
- (b) the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales/Tribiwnlys Adolygu Iechyd Meddwl Cymru (“MHRTW”);
- (c) a rent assessment committee constituted in accordance with Schedule 10 to the Rent Act 1977 (including a leasehold valuation tribunal and a residential property tribunal) (“RPTW”);
- (d) the Education Tribunal for Wales/Tribiwnlys Addysg Cymru (“ETW”);
- (e) a tribunal constituted in accordance with Schedule 3 to the Education Act 2005 (registration of inspectors in Wales: tribunals hearing appeals under section 27);
- (f) a tribunal drawn from the Adjudication Panel for Wales/Panel Dyfarnu Cymru (“APW”);
- (g) the Welsh Language Tribunal/Tribiwnlys y Gymraeg (“WLT”).

1.5 Those who are familiar with the list of Welsh Tribunals will realise that the Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SENTW) is missing from the list. That tribunal was renamed Educational Tribunal Wales (ETW) by provisions within the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 which came into force on 1 September 2021. ETW has jurisdiction to determine appeals about additional learning needs, special educational needs and discrimination in schools. Appeals can be brought by or behalf of nursery age children and young people from 16 to 25 years.

1.6 The Welsh Tribunals are administered by the Welsh Tribunals Unit (WTU) which is part of the civil service supporting the Welsh Government but which strives to be and appear to be as independent of Government as is practicable.

1.7 The remainder of this report consists of two main sections. In Section 2, I provide factual information (an update) about such matters as numbers of cases, recruitment and appointments, cross-ticketing as between Welsh Tribunals and with English Tribunals, Practice Directions, my engagements, the working arrangements and budget of the Welsh Tribunals Unit and the use of the Welsh language within the Tribunals. In Section 3 I describe the main features of the Law Commission's report on Welsh Tribunals which was presented to the Senedd and the response of the Welsh Government both to the Commission's report and to the Report of the Commission on Justice in Wales. There is a short section 4 which provides me with an opportunity to thank all those who have assisted me throughout my tenure and to offer a few reflections.

2. Updates on Previous Annual Reports

2.1 The number of applications received by the Welsh Tribunals in the financial year 2021-2022 and between 1 April 2022 and 31 December 2022 is set out in the Table below. The number of applications in the financial years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are provided for comparison purposes.

Table 1: Number of applications per tribunal

Tribunal	Financial Year 2019-2020	Financial Year 2020-2021	Financial Year 2021-2022	April – December 2022	Hearings held in Welsh April – December 2022
ALTW	22	13	20	24	0
MHRTW	1943*	1790	1840	1291	0
RPTW	112	106	113	84	0
SENTW/ ETW	172	116	151	68	3
APW	2	4	10	1	0
WLT	16	13	3	0	2

* Historically MHRTW data for annual reports was exported from a number of sources (Manual and electronic). In 2019-20 the data for applications and referrals received have been taken from MHRTW CRM records management system removing the risk of any human error. This change in reporting methods has created the appearance of a decrease in applications and referrals for MHRTW but the probability is that had the same methodology been adopted in previous years the applications and referrals would have been of a similar order to those of recent years.

2.2 Further information about the nature of the work undertaken and the membership of each tribunal is set out in each of their annual reports. All such reports are published on the website of each tribunal.

2.3 During the financial year 2021-22 the Deputy President of SENTW/ETW was appointed following an expression of interest competition organised by the President of ETW. In the financial year 2022-23 3 legal members were appointed to ETW following a competition administered by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). MHRTW welcomed a total of 53 new members over the period 1 May 2021 to 31 December 2022, namely 20 lay members, 19 legal members and 14 medical members. In that same period 9 legal members were appointed to RPTW. There was much less cross ticketing during this period. In October 2021, one lay member of MHRTW was authorised to sit in APW. In January 2022, two lay members from MHRTW and APW were authorised to sit in RPTW.

2.4 It is worth noting that all legal appointments to the Welsh Tribunals are open to legal practitioners who practise in England as well as Wales. Essentially, that is because all legal practitioners in Wales and England are qualified to practice in both countries.

2.5 In November 2021 the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) launched a competition for 2 full time salaried legal members of MHRTW. This competition was the consequence of an evaluation made by the President of the MHRTW and I (with considerable assistance from WTU) as to whether the work of this Tribunal justified the recruitment of salaried legal members – the unanimous conclusion being that it did. It was, therefore, very disappointing that there was a very limited number of applicants for appointment and that the JAC did not consider that any of the applicants were appointable.

2.6 Although there has been a good deal of speculation about why these posts attracted so little interest, I have no reliable evidence base upon which to draw proper conclusions. Generally speaking, my experience has been that there is fierce competition for judicial appointments throughout all four countries of the UK, although I am also aware that there have been individual competitions for judicial appointments in both the Courts and tribunals of England and Wales which have failed to attract much interest.

2.7 Despite this set back, a further competition for 2 salaried members of MHRTW will be launched in the coming weeks. In this competition (unlike the last) applicants will be invited to apply for posts which will require them to hear cases relating to restricted patients as well as cases involving all other persons making applications to the MHRTW. I intend to ensure that this competition is publicised widely, and every effort will be made to ensure that applicants of suitable quality come forward.

2.8 I reached the conclusion that the salaried posts being advertised should be aimed at candidates who were suitable for appointment to hear cases relating to restricted patients (as well as carrying out all other aspects of the work of MHRTW) because over recent months, in particular, there has been very considerable strain on a few of those legal members of the Tribunal who are authorised to hear cases involving restricted patients. So much so that I recently decided to invoke the power (delegated to me by the Lord Chief Justice) to authorise existing legal members of MHRTW (who were not authorised to hear cases involving restricted patients) to hear such cases. I invited expressions of interest from all the existing legal members of MHRTW and indicated that I was contemplating authorising up to 4 members. 11 members of the Tribunal responded. I have a statutory duty to consult the Lord Chancellor upon those whom I intend to appoint and I am currently waiting for his views upon the candidates whom I have indicated to him that I would like to appoint.

2.9 On 10 March 2022 the retirement age for all tribunal members in England and Wales was raised from 70 to 75.¹ The legislation bringing that change into force applied to all the members of the Welsh Tribunals who were governed by predecessor legislation of passed by the UK Parliament.² Until 10 March 2022 all the members of the Welsh Tribunals (with certain exceptions) were required to retire at 70 but could be authorised to “sit in retirement” on an annual basis until the age of 75. It was commonly the case that members applied to sit in retirement and, subject to the business needs of their tribunal, many members were authorised to sit beyond the age of 70. The person making the decision as to sitting in retirement was the appointing authority e.g. the Lord Chancellor for members of MHRTW.

2.10 Following the coming into force of the 2022 Act the “sitting in retirement” regime applies only to legal members who are under the age of 75 at the date of their retirement. A lay or specialist member of a Welsh Tribunal cannot sit once they retire if they chose to retire prior to age 75. If a legal member of the Welsh Tribunals retires prior to age 73 he/she may apply

1 See Section 121 and Schedule 1 Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022.

2 Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993.

to sit in retirement and the person making the decision as whether to authorise sitting in retirement is the President of Welsh Tribunals. This is a new role for the President; the power has been conferred by the UK Parliament. The Welsh Government has thought it appropriate that secondary legislation is passed to underpin sitting in retirement under the 2022 Act. These regulations are shortly to be made by the First Minister with the concurrence of the President of Welsh Tribunals – perhaps a further sign of the growing role of the President.

2.11 Following the coming into force of the 2022 Act, material provisions of the 1993 Act were repealed. They included the sitting in retirement provisions contained in the 1993 Act. At the time of repeal an application for authorisation for sitting in retirement for a lay member of MHRTW was extant but not considered by the Lord Chancellor. As a result there is no legal mechanism to enable her to sit in retirement and a very experienced Welsh speaking member of the Tribunal has been lost to it.

2.12 Since April 2021 I have attended many meetings of bodies of which I am a member by virtue of my Presidency of Welsh Tribunals. I am a member of the Tribunal Judiciary Executive Board, the Administrative Justice Council, the Welsh Committee of the Judges' Council which is chaired by the Lord Chief Justice and the newly constituted Law Council for Wales. As I explained in my last Annual Report, the Tribunal Judiciary Executive Board has judicial representation from all the constituent parts of the United Kingdom and is made up exclusively of judges. It is a very significant forum for discussions about judicial decision making in relation to the processes to be adopted within all the tribunals of the UK. Naturally, it provided invaluable sources of information about working practices which could be adopted by Welsh Tribunals so as to take account of the restrictions imposed to combat the effect of the pandemic.

2.13 The Administrative Justice Council is also a UK body. It has a wide membership consisting of judges, academic lawyers, academics in fields related to justice and administrators. The head of the Welsh Tribunals Unit, a representative of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales and I are regular attenders at Council meetings. The Council provides a forum for detailed discussions upon topics of interest relating to the workings of tribunals as well as providing detailed insight into substantive legal issues which arise within the tribunals. The Welsh Committee of the Judges' Council is an advisory body which informs the Lord Chief Justice upon issues which relate to Wales. Its membership comprises judges at all levels from lay magistrates to Lord Lloyd-Jones in the Supreme Court. Obviously much of its time is taken up with matters arising in the courts and Welsh tribunals of England and Wales which are administered by HMCTS Wales but the Committee receives a report from me at every meeting about all important matters relating to Welsh Tribunals which sometimes provokes considerable debate. The Law Council for Wales is still in its infancy but it has begun work on projects which will, when they come to fruition, be of considerable benefit to the evolving laws and legal institutions in Wales.

2.14 Each of these bodies meets regularly and membership of each ensures that the President of Welsh Tribunals is very well placed to keep abreast of all important developments in the tribunals which exist in all four countries of the UK and in all matters concerning the administration of justice in Wales.

2.15 As and when necessary, I consult with the Presiding Judges of Wales. Most recently I have consulted with the senior presiding judge relating to members of the MHRTW who are also serving circuit judges and, whose time for sitting in MHRTW is, therefore, necessarily limited. I fear that such are the demands upon circuit judges who try criminal and family cases that they may have less and less time to sit in MHRTW. If that gloomy prediction comes to pass the Tribunal will lose legal members with invaluable experience.

2.16 I have continued to chair quarterly meetings of the judicial leads of the Welsh Tribunals. These meetings were always intended to provide the opportunity for discussing matters of concern to the judicial leads of individual tribunals and/or matters which concern all the tribunals. I have no doubt that they have succeeded in fulfilling that goal. The meetings also provide the opportunity for direct contact between the judicial leads as a group and senior members of the WTU. When invited I have also attended meetings and training days organised by individual tribunals.

2.17 On 1 November 2021 I appeared as witness before the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee of the Senedd. I was asked many detailed and thought provoking questions. My answers to the various questions are, of course, a matter of public record. I am grateful to the Committee for the opportunity of appearing before them and I hope and expect that I will appear before the Committee once more before I retire.

2.18 On 23rd November 2021 my Third Annual Report was the subject of a debate in a plenary session of the Senedd. This was the second occasion that an Annual Report was debated in the Senedd and as with the first occasion the contributions of members of the Senedd were not narrowly confined to the four corners of my report. The debate ranged far and wide over matters relating to justice in Wales.

2.19 My last annual meeting with the First Minister took place on 13th October 2021. As in previous years the First Minister was accompanied by the Counsel General and his private secretary; I was accompanied by the Deputy Director – Constitution and Welsh Tribunals and the head of WTU. Not surprisingly, much of the conversation was taken up with the effect of the pandemic on the work of the tribunals. However, we also discussed the possibility of appointing full time salaried legal members of MHRTW, the Commission for Justice in Wales, the Law Commission project on Welsh Tribunals, the role of the President of Welsh Tribunals and succession planning in respect of that office. My last meeting with the First Minister is scheduled to take place on 1 February 2023.

2.20 I should record that I have had very frequent discussions with the head of the WTU, more occasional discussions with other civil servants and, as and when necessary, meetings with the two Welsh Government lawyers who have been given the specific role of providing legal advice to me, the WTU and, if necessary, the individual tribunals. The support given to me by all these people has been extensive and invaluable throughout my tenure.

2.21 Finally I should mention two “one-off” meetings which have taken place in 2022. In the spring I met with Lord Wolfson KC, then a Justice Minister of the UK Government, about a proposed UK Bill of Rights. The discussion was informative and I was given the opportunity to provide my view as to the impact of such a Bill on the work of the Welsh Tribunals. In the summer, I met with the Welsh Commissioner of JAC, Dr Barry Morgan, to discuss a number of issues relating to appointments to Welsh Tribunals.

2.22 More or less since March 2020 the WTU staff have been working from home in line with Welsh government guidelines. Small numbers of staff were made key workers in order to access and deal with post at the offices as and when necessary. While a great deal of the work of the Tribunals can be conducted electronically hard copies of some documents are still sent to offices. I am extremely grateful to the individuals who have worked so flexibly with the aim of ensuring that all tribunal services have been maintained despite the difficult circumstances prevailing. The WTU was quick off the mark to find alternative hearing methods rather than face to face hearings when the restrictions were put in place last March, as I have described in previous reports.

2.23 WTU staff based at offices in Llandrindod Wells have been relocated to refurbished offices within the existing Powys County Council building. This relocation occurred in July 2021. These offices are the headquarters of ETW, ALTW and APW. No hearings take place at this location since it is not appropriate to conduct hearings in a building which is owned and, in part, occupied by Powys County Council given that it can sometimes be involved as a party in individual cases. Cases brought before ETW, ALTW and APW which require face to face hearings are heard in locations which best meets the needs of the parties and tribunal members.

2.24 In the financial year 2021-22 the budget allocated to WTU was £4,148,000.00. That budget was intended to provide for both tribunal and administrative running costs. The actual expenditure for the year was £4,092,047.00.

2.25 This is the second financial year running in which the budget has exceeded expenditure. However, the underspend in this financial year was small compared with the underspend in 2020-21. It is almost entirely a product of the continuing use of remote hearings. Such hearings are inevitably less expensive to operate with no fees payable for hearing rooms and minimal travel expenses for tribunal members and staff.

2.26 The budget allocation for 2022-23 is £4,233,000. I cannot predict whether the budget will be used in full although as with the previous year much will depend upon the ratio between remote and face to face hearings. No doubt my successor will provide appropriate details when he produces his first report.

2.27 All the Tribunals continue to offer a full Welsh language service to their users in accordance with duties imposed by the compliance notices issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to Welsh Language standards.

2.28 Whilst APW is not subject to the standards, it operates in line with the other tribunals and treats the Welsh language no less favourably than English. In each of my earlier reports I predicted that it was likely that APW would be made subject to the standards but that has not yet happened. Nonetheless, it is still expected that this will occur in the near future.

2.29 The uptake of the Welsh language service remains very low. Table 1 above shows that during the period under review the Welsh language was used in 5 hearings across all Welsh Tribunals. In 2020-21 Welsh was used in 20 cases and in 2021-22 there were 6 cases.

3. The Law Commission Report and Responses to it

3.1 On 8 December 2021 the Law Commission presented its report on Devolved Tribunals to the Senedd. No doubt the Law Commission used the phrase Devolved Tribunals (as opposed to Welsh Tribunals) because its terms of reference permitted the Commission to consider a wider body of tribunals and panels than those specified as being Welsh Tribunals in section 59 of the Wales Act 2017. As was very much to be expected, the Commission undertook a very detailed investigation. The report contains 53 recommendations. In my view, it must be read in full in order to understand its true importance.

3.2 Nevertheless it is important that I highlight what I regard as the major recommendations made by the Commission. They are:

- the Welsh Tribunals which I list above in my Introduction should be replaced by a single First-tier Tribunal for Wales, which may then be sub-divided into chambers;
- the Valuation Tribunal for Wales should become a chamber of the First-tier Tribunal;
- school exclusion appeals should be heard by ETW;
- An Appeal Tribunal for Wales should be created to hear and determine appeals from the First-tier Tribunal;
- the President of Welsh Tribunals should be the presiding judge of the First-tier Tribunal and the Appeal Tribunal;
- a Tribunal procedure Committee should be created which should be chaired by the President of Welsh Tribunals;
- A Tribunals Service for Wales should be created as a non-ministerial department;
- Welsh Ministers and others responsible for the administration of justice in Wales should be subject to a statutory duty to uphold the independence of the Welsh tribunals;
- All members of the First-tier Tribunal for Wales and the Appeal Tribunal of Wales should be required to take a judicial oath or affirmation.

3.3 Those who are familiar with my earlier reports, my responses to the draft report of the Law Commission and public statements made by me during the course of giving evidence to the Constitution Legislation and Justice Committee will know that I very much support the recommendations I have highlighted above. Nonetheless I recognise that two of those recommendations, in particular, do not command the support of all those who responded to the draft proposals upon which the Law Commission consulted. They are the proposal that the Valuation Tribunal for Wales should become part of the First-tier Tribunal for Wales and that Wales should have its own Appeal Tribunal.

3.4 I acknowledge that the Valuation Tribunal has its own structure and administration which, currently, is substantially different from the structure of the Welsh Tribunals and the WTU. I had the pleasure and honour of addressing the annual training day of the Tribunal in the autumn of 2021 in which some of its members made clear their opposition to being part of the First-tier Tribunal. Nonetheless I am convinced by the reasons advanced by the Law Commission that the Valuation Tribunal should join the family of Welsh Tribunals and not remain a stand-alone body.

3.5 I regard the creation of an Appeal Tribunal for Wales as essential. Appeal rights and routes of Appeal from the Welsh Tribunals are complicated and confusing. Having one route of appeal to an appeal tribunal which applies the same criteria for determining an appeal regardless of the particular Welsh Tribunal from which the appeal originated would be a distinct improvement to the tribunal system in Wales.

3.6 I am aware that the Welsh Government has set out its response to the recommendations contained within the Law Commission Report in a document entitled “Delivering Justice for Wales” which was published on 25 May 2022. As its title suggests the document is wide-ranging; it considers crucial issues about how justice as a whole should be administered in Wales. However, Chapter 9 is devoted to the views of Welsh Government on Tribunal reform with particular reference to the Report and recommendations of the Law Commission.

3.7 It is clear from Chapter 9 of “Delivering Justice for Wales” that the Welsh Government is supportive of many of the 53 recommendations made by the Law Commission in its report. In particular there are expressions of support for a much greater degree of independence for the WTU, the creation of a First-tier Tribunal for Wales, the creation of an Appeal Tribunal for Wales and the enhancement of the role of President of Welsh Tribunals in accordance with the recommendations of the Law Commission. Welsh Government also supports the Valuation Tribunal becoming part of the First-tier Tribunal although it recognises the need for further consultation on this issue. It is worth noting too that while the Welsh Government supports WTU having a much greater degree of independence it has not committed to creating a non-ministerial department to administer the Welsh Tribunals.

3.8 It is, of course, widely acknowledged that many of the recommendations made by the Law Commission will require legislation if they are to be brought into effect. My understanding is that the Welsh Government intends to bring forward a Tribunal Bill prior to the next Senedd elections. While it is not my place to comment on what might be described as the political aspects of devolution it seems to me to be self-evident that if the Welsh Tribunals are to flourish as devolved institutions many of the reforms suggested by the Law Commission must form the basis of that Bill. The Law Commission began its report by describing how the Welsh Tribunals evolved haphazardly. I quote:

“Most [tribunals] were created at various points in the 20th century, as thinking about tribunals and their relationship with Government was evolving. They were also created before devolution. As a result their processes and procedural rules vary significantly, and there are gaps and inconsistencies”

3.9 The Welsh Government accepts that description as being accurate. There appears to be a clear recognition that nothing short of appropriate legislation can cure the many anomalies and inconsistencies which currently exist in the Welsh Tribunal system.

4. Thanks and a Few Reflections

4.1 I should record publicly my thanks to all the members of the Welsh Tribunals and all the members of staff of the WTU for their hard work over my period in office and especially, of course, since March 2020. I have enjoyed the unstinting support of many people for which I am very grateful and I have enjoyed very good working relations with the head of WTU and her senior staff. I believe, although they may have different views, that I have enjoyed equally good working relations with the judicial leads of all the Welsh Tribunals.

4.2 All aspects of the justice systems operating in the United Kingdom have faced extraordinary challenges as a consequence of the Covid Pandemic which began in earnest in early 2020. The Welsh Tribunals, so used to all or nearly all its hearings being conducted “face to face”, adapted to remote ways of working with speed and efficiency and they have become extremely adept at hearings conducted via a video platform or telephone. No doubt one of the more important tasks of my successor together with the judicial leads over the coming months will be to strike an appropriate balance between remote and “face to face” hearings.

4.3 I wish to pay particular tribute to two judicial leads who will be giving up their roles shortly. Ms Rhiannon Walker has served for approximately 20 years as the President of SENTW and then ETW. Her contribution to solving the educational problems of very many vulnerable children and young people has been very significant. To carry out a leadership role of a tribunal for 20 years or thereabouts is an outstanding achievement. I understand that she is retiring in the true sense of the word. She will undoubtedly be greatly missed and I wish her a long and happy retirement. Ms Claire Sharp is the President of APW and she has held that position for 7 years. Under her leadership the Panel has dealt with a number of difficult cases in an exemplary fashion. Ms Sharp will not be lost to the administration of justice in Wales. She was appointed as a salaried Employment Judge based in Wales in 2021 and, understandably, she has concluded that she cannot combine a full-time salaried role as an employment judge with the leadership of APW. I wish her every success in her flourishing career.

4.4 It has been an honour to have spent the last 6 years of my judicial career engaged in a role which is concerned exclusively with Wales. That said, the role of the President of Welsh Tribunals is not and should not be introspective. I have learned a great deal about the work of tribunals from my involvement in United Kingdom bodies such as the Tribunals Judiciary Executive Board and the Administrative Justice Council and I have benefitted substantially from the willingness of colleagues in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland to share with me aspects of their ways of working. My work as President has without out doubt “opened my eyes” to the challenges of devolution and sparked a keen interest in the constitutional arrangements which govern the United Kingdom. These are topics which I will follow with great interest over the next few years.

4.5 The next 4 years will be challenging for my successor. He will need to be abreast of all aspects of tribunal reform in Wales as well as potentially significant challenges to MHRTW, if, as anticipated, the UK Parliament enacts new legislation relating to mental health. The last 6 years was a good time to have been the first President of Welsh Tribunals; I have a strong suspicion that the next 4 years will be even more interesting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Wyn Williams'.

Sir Wyn Williams
President of Welsh Tribunals