



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**            **Research to prepare for the devolution of policing in Wales**

**DATE**            **14 November 2023**

**BY**                **Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General and Minister for the  
Constitution**

**Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip**

Pursuing the devolution of justice and policing is a commitment in the Welsh Government's [Programme for Government 2021-26](#). As Members are aware, this commitment follows the unanimous recommendation of the Commission on Justice in Wales (the [Thomas Commission](#)), which reported in 2019 following the largest ever examination of the operation of the justice system in Wales. Devolution of policing specifically was also a recommendation from the Commission on Devolution in Wales (the [Silk Commission](#)) established by the UK Government, which reported in 2014.

Our ultimate objective remains to pursue the devolution of justice and policing in its entirety. However, we believe that a phased approach is preferable. Policing is one of the areas we have consistently identified as suitable for early devolution, as well as youth justice and probation - in both of these areas, work is already underway to prepare for potential devolution, as was set out in our statement on 27 June.

In pursuing the case for policing devolution, it is important that we understand the challenges involved, as well as how those could be addressed. This includes, among other things, understanding the impacts on other areas of the justice system, on cross-border working, and on the additional capacity needed within Wales.

Devolution is also not an end in itself; the Welsh Government advocates it because it offers opportunities to improve the delivery of public services and to better serve the people of Wales. It is therefore also important to understand fully the potential benefits, including how we could deliver services in a more integrated, more tailored or more effective way. The four police forces in Wales have already chosen to work together and with Welsh Government and other bodies, not least through the Policing Partnership Board for Wales which works to improve the policing service to the public in the devolved environment.

We have therefore commissioned an independent team to work with key stakeholders to understand the benefits, opportunities, challenges and risks of a devolved policing model for Wales. The review is intended to propose a long-term vision for a devolved policing service in Wales, including its underpinning principles and values and the overall outcomes we might expect to see for people and communities. It is also being asked to report on the practical considerations associated with implementing policing devolution in Wales. The review will be led by Carl Foulkes, previously the Chief Constable of North Wales, and will liaise with Dame Vera Baird in her capacity as Independent Expert Adviser to the Welsh Government on Justice Devolution.

The review is supported by all four of the elected Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales. We also hope and expect that, as with the Thomas and Silk Commissions, the review will see strong participation from all of the principal bodies involved in the delivery of policing in Wales, including all of Wales's police forces themselves. Finally, the review will also engage with groups and communities whose experience of dealing with the police is in a personal rather than a professional capacity – such as victims of crime, or ethnic minority communities with historically low levels of trust in policing.