



President of Welsh Tribunals Fifth Annual Report 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024

24 May 2024



Tribiwnlysoedd Cymru
Welsh Tribunals

Llywydd / President

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	The Office of President of Welsh Tribunals	5
3	Workload	7
4	Finance	8
5	Judicial Training	10
6	Welsh Language	11
7	Appointments	13
8	Tribunal Reform	13
9	The First Year	15
	Annex	16

1 Introduction

1.1 This is the fifth, and my first, Annual Report of the President of Welsh Tribunals. The first four reports were prepared by my predecessor, Sir Wyn Williams, who served as President from July 2017 until his retirement in March 2023. This period saw the creation of the office by section 60 of the Wales Act 2017, and the development of the role in overseeing the six devolved tribunals including enhancing their structures and increasing their administrative coherence. His legacy includes a developing reform programme for the Welsh tribunals which I am pleased and proud to inherit. Sir Wyn's part in this remarkable journey cannot be overemphasised. Those who work in and with our tribunals, and those who come before them as parties, owe him an enormous debt.

1.2 I was appointed his successor on 1 April 2023, being sworn in by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon, at Cardiff Crown Court on 2 May 2023. Over the last 25 years, I have spent much of my time as a judge in Wales, and it is a great honour to have been appointed as the senior judge in the Welsh Tribunals particularly at such an interesting and lively time in their development.

1.3 As explained in Sir Wyn's First Report, the Wales Act 2017 imposes an obligation upon the President of Welsh Tribunals to represent the views of members of the Welsh Tribunals to the Welsh Ministers and to the Senedd. In addition to regular meetings with the First Minister of Wales and Counsel General – my first meeting with them was on 8 June 2023 – following consultation with them, and with the need for appropriate transparency and accountability firmly in mind, Sir Wyn decided that the best way to discharge that duty would be by producing a regular report which would be presented to the First Minister and Presiding Officer of the Senedd. These reports were to be annual; but, for the reasons set out by Sir Wyn in its Introduction, the Fourth Report of the President of Welsh Tribunals covered the period April 2021 to December 2022. This Report covers the period January 2023 to March 2024. In future years, I shall return to preparing reports for the financial year April to March.

1.4 The Welsh Tribunals under my arm are set out in section 59 of the Wales Act 2017, as amended. They are (with the acronyms I shall use in this Report):

- (a) Tribiwnlys Tir Amaethyddol Cymru/the Agricultural Land Tribunal for Wales (“ALTW”);
- (b) Tribiwnlys Adolygu Iechyd Meddwl Cymru/the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales (“MHRTW”);
- (c) Tribiwnlys Eiddo Preswyl Cymru/the Residential Property Tribunal Wales (comprising three constituent tribunals: rent assessment committees constituted in accordance with Schedule 10 to the Rent Act 1977, a leasehold valuation tribunal and a residential property tribunal) (“RPTW”);
- (d) Tribiwnlys Addysg Cymru/the Education Tribunal for Wales (which also manages the jurisdictions of tribunals relating to the registration of school inspectors and nursery education inspectors) (“ETW”);
- (e) Panel Dyfarnu Cymru/the Adjudication Panel for Wales (“APW”); and
- (f) Tribiwnlys y Gymraeg/the Welsh Language Tribunal (“WLT”).

1.5 The following tribunals operate in Wales but are not included in section 59, and do not fall under the remit of the President of Welsh Tribunals.

- (a) Non-devolved tribunals which form part of the system of tribunals which operate across England & Wales reformed by the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, such as those which adjudicate upon social security benefits and child support, immigration and asylum, and employment. These are administered by His Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service Wales ("HMCTS Wales"), and their judiciary is headed by the Senior President of Tribunals. In this report, I shall refer to them as "the HMCTS tribunals".
- (b) Tribunals which operate in devolved areas in Wales, but not under the President of Welsh Tribunals. For example, the Valuation Tribunal for Wales which has its own legal, judicial and administrative structures; and tribunals which determine school admission and exclusion appeals which are administered by local education authorities without any overarching structures.

1.6 The Welsh Tribunals are supported by the Welsh Tribunals Unit ("the WTU"), headed by Rhian Davies Rees. It is a part of the Welsh Government civil service, but operating as independent as it can practicably be, independence which is encouraged and supported by the Welsh Government. The Welsh Tribunals Unit is made up of about 35 members of staff who are located across Wales.

2 The Office of President of Welsh Tribunals

2.1 The office of President of Welsh tribunals was created by section 60 of the Wales Act 2017, a UK statute. Although the role is restricted to devolved tribunals dealing with devolved subject matter, the post is expressly not a devolved Welsh authority for the purposes of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

2.2 Given the moves to reform Welsh Tribunals (which include proposals to reform the role and functions of the President), a reminder of the current powers and duties of the President of Welsh Tribunals as set out in section 60 of the 2017 Act is timely. As Sir Wyn Williams explained in his First Annual Report, the 2017 Act does not comprehensively define the powers and duties of the President; but it is implicit in section 60 that the President is the most senior judge within the Welsh Tribunals and, in addition to the duties expressly referred to in the Act, he or she exercises a supervisory role over each of the Welsh Tribunals. Therefore, for example, the President ensures that complaints received about the conduct of Welsh Tribunal members are investigated fairly, properly and in accordance with the relevant complaints procedure. In addition to tribunal-specific meetings, I meet all the Judicial Leads of the Welsh Tribunals and the senior members of the WTU every quarter to discuss issues that cut across tribunal boundaries.

2.3 The express duties of the President prescribed by section 60 are limited to representing the views of members of the Welsh Tribunals to the Welsh Ministers and to other members of the Senedd as described above; and to maintaining appropriate arrangements for the training, guidance and welfare of members of the Welsh Tribunals within the resources made available by the Welsh Ministers. In pursuance of these powers, the President can (for example) issue Guidance Notes to tribunal members as I have done on the use of the English and Welsh languages in tribunal administration and proceedings, and sittings from abroad.

2.4 However, in exercising his or her wider supervisory powers, the President is also required by section 60(4) to have regard to the need for proceedings before Welsh Tribunals to be fair and handled quickly and efficiently; for members to be appropriately expert in the subject matter or law applied in their tribunals; and for the need “to develop innovative methods of resolving disputes that are of a type that may be brought before those tribunals”. Those, in practice, impose substantial obligations on the President.

2.5 I also regard the role of the President in construing and thereby developing the law in the devolved areas to be important. The President does not have any express statutory power to sit – and, to date, has not sat – in any Welsh Tribunal, but I have been appointed a Judge of the Administrative Appeals Chamber of the Upper Tribunal (part of the reserved tribunal system) which hears appeals from the Welsh Tribunals, enabling me to hear such appeals. On appeals which go further, I am also able to sit in the Court of Appeal (Civil Division).

2.6 As President of Welsh Tribunals, I sit on a number of bodies which concern the wider justice system in Wales (such as the Welsh Committee of the Judges’ Council chaired by the Lady Chief Justice, the Law Council for Wales, the Welsh Advisory Committee of the Law Commission and the Lord Chancellor’s Standing Committee on the Welsh Language) and the tribunals systems across the UK (such as the Tribunal Judiciary Executive Board and the Administrative Justice Council). Each of these bodies meets regularly and enables me as President of Welsh Tribunals to keep up to date with developments in the wider justice system in Wales and the tribunals systems in all four home jurisdictions, and to influence those developments.

2.7 Shortly after my appointment, I identified four areas that I considered warranted prioritisation in the year 2023-24, namely judicial training, the use of the Welsh language in the tribunals, appointments of Presidents and salaried judges, and reform through the Tribunals Bill. Please see Annex at the end of the document, that I published at the beginning of the year in which I set out these priorities and the steps I proposed to take in pursuit of them. I review these priority areas below (paragraphs 5-8).

3 Workload

3.1 The number of applications received by the Welsh Tribunals in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 are set out below, with the figures for 2020-21 and 2021-22 for comparison purposes.

Table 1: Number of applications per tribunal

Tribunal	Financial Year 2020-21	Financial Year 2021-22	Financial Year 2022-23	Financial Year 2023-24
ALTW	13	20	28	17
MHRTW	1790	1840	1747	1798
RPTW	106	113	182	184
ETW*	116	151	90	108
APW	4	10	3	6
WLT	13	3	1	2

* Formerly the Special Education Needs Tribunal Wales, renamed from 1 September 2021 by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

3.2 Further information about the nature of the work undertaken and the membership of each tribunal is set out in their respective annual reports, which are published on the website of each tribunal.

4 Finance

4.1 The budget provides for tribunal and administrative running costs. During the 2022-2023 and 2023-24 financial years, the budget allocated to tribunals was £4,233,000 and £4,150,000 respectively. Actual expenditure for 2022-23 was £4,454,476, and for 2023-24 was £5,016,688.

4.2 The tribunals' annual expenditure has therefore exceeded the allocation. This is largely down to increased fee-paid judicial time and recruitment costs, increases in pay and pension costs and, following COVID, a return of face-to-face hearings in MHRTW which is the largest tribunal. There has been no increase in budget allocations to meet this increasing expenditure.

4.3 Appointments as members of the Welsh Tribunals are currently not all made by the Welsh Ministers: some are still made by the Lord Chancellor. However, whilst terms and conditions are the responsibility of the appointing authority, the responsibility for remuneration for all Welsh devolved judicial office holders is with Welsh Ministers.

4.4 Having fee rates that are comparable with reserved courts and tribunals administered by HMCTS is vital for Welsh Tribunals. It is important not only because fairness dictates that those who do the same work as judges and non-legal members in Wales should be paid comparably; but also because all but one of our devolved tribunal judiciary are part-time fee-paid and many have other, HMCTS tribunal or court appointments, so any differential in pay may lead to their preferring to sit in other courts and tribunals rather than the less-well paid devolved tribunals. Parity is therefore not only a matter of principle and fairness, but any differential has considerable potential practical consequences.

4.5 Since 2017, much work has been done to ensure that Welsh devolved tribunal members' fees are in line with appropriate comparators in the courts and HMCTS tribunals. In 2019, the First Minister agreed a revised fee structure which aligned the fees of legal members. In August 2020, a similar exercise was undertaken for non-legal members. Since then, pay rates for devolved tribunal members have been comparable with those in the courts and tribunals administered by HMCTS.

4.6 In July 2023, in line with the recommendation of the independent Senior Salaries Review Body ("the SSRB"), the Lord Chancellor announced a 7% increase for judicial office holders who sit in courts and HMCTS tribunals, effective from 1 April 2023.

4.7 The Welsh Government did not contribute to the SSRB Review that led to that recommendation and, of course, is bound by neither its recommendation in relation to judicial office holders nor the decision taken by the UK Government to accept it. Following considerable engagement, including a meeting between the First Minister and me on 18 December 2023 to discuss the potential consequences of not adopting a 7% pay increase, on 12 February 2024, the First Minister announced that, effective from 1 April 2023, there would be a 5% pay award for devolved tribunal members. A pay award less than that granted in relation to reserved courts and tribunals was, said the First Minister, taken very reluctantly but made in the light of the difficult financial backdrop against which no pay award greater than 5% had been made for any sector for which the Welsh Ministers are responsible for pay decisions.

4.8 Although the First Minister made very clear that the Welsh Government is committed to returning to pay parity as soon as the budgetary situation allows, the pay differential has had an inevitable adverse effect on our tribunals, mainly on the willingness of members of the MHRTW (where many members have other tribunal and professional appointments) to sit. This has compounded the difficulties facing that tribunal in constituting panels for hearings following the COVID hiatus. This is something on which I am actively working, with the judicial leadership and senior administrators of that tribunal.

4.9 The First Minister also indicated a willingness to consider differential working practices which also make sitting in Welsh Tribunals (and, particularly, the MHRTW) less attractive. For example, members of the MHRTW equivalent in England (the Health, Education and Social Care Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal) have more generous terms than members of MHRTW in respect of cancellations, and reading and writing up time, which may make sitting in that tribunal more attractive. Levelling out these discrepancies would assist in encouraging MHRTW members to sit, and I will pursue this with the appropriate Ministers. However, like any working practices review, it is, at best, likely to take some time.

5 Judicial Training

5.1 As indicated above, I have an express statutory obligation to maintain appropriate arrangements for the training of Welsh Tribunal members within the resources made available by the Welsh Government.

5.2 The training provided by each tribunal comprises annual training of usually one or two consecutive days, with additional training on (e.g.) any new statutory provisions that change the tribunal's work and require specific training prior to implementation. The MHRTW also have four annual workshops of which members are expected to attend one, namely two face-to-face in South Wales, one in North Wales and a virtual workshop for those who cannot attend any of those that are face-to-face. For most of the tribunals, the annual conference is face-to-face, and a rare and valuable opportunity for the members to meet and discuss issues informally as well as in a formal training context. As envisaged in my Priorities Paper, this year, I attended and spoke at each of the annual conferences, which gave me an opportunity to meet members, answer their questions, and discuss their work with them both in a formal session and informally. I found it invaluable.

5.3 In pursuit of the aims for judicial training set out in my Priorities Paper, I appointed Judge Richard Payne (the President of RPTW) as Judicial Lead on Training, with the remit of ensuring that the best value for money is obtained from the training budget.

5.4 I have instigated a common feedback system from the training held, which will help in identifying future training needs and inform both the scope and mode of future training. We are investigating the extent to which training can be delivered remotely, with a view to increasing the training we are able to give to members within the allocated budget.

5.5 The Judicial College has no remit to train devolved tribunal members; but the College has indicated a willingness to support our tribunal members by making training materials available and allowing those responsible for tribunal training in the devolved tribunals to attend Judicial College training sessions as observers. Judge Payne is pursuing this source of training materials and expertise.

6 Welsh Language

6.1 So far as legal obligations are concerned, all the tribunals except the WLT and APW are listed in Schedule 6 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and so are subject to the duties and standards set out in the Welsh Language Standards (No 4) Regulations 2016.

6.2 However, the tribunals which fall within the Measure are only bound to comply with the Service Delivery Standards set out in Schedule 1 to the Regulations, the Policy Making Standards (the requirement to consider the impact of new policies on the Welsh Language) set out in Schedule 2 to the Regulations and the Record Keeping Standards (in the case of the Tribunals, the keeping of records of complaints relating to the Welsh Language) set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulations. None is subject to the standards set out in the other Schedules, namely the Promotion Standards or the Operational Standards.

6.3 Whilst the WLT, the APW and the President of Welsh Tribunals are not formally governed by the Measure or Regulations, acknowledging the spirit of the scheme, they each voluntarily comply with the same standards.

6.4 Positive results were received from the Welsh Language Commissioner's "Mystery Shopper" Exercise in 2023, which tested compliance with the Welsh Language Standards in the RPTW and ETW.

6.5 Those are the formal legal standards. All Welsh Tribunals encourage and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, both in engaging with the service administration (e.g. all forms are available in the Welsh language, and correspondence in the Welsh language is encouraged) and in hearings. Each tribunal has the facility and capability of conducting both the administration of cases and hearings in the Welsh language. In each application form, parties are asked whether they wish to conduct their correspondence and/or hearing in the Welsh language, or the English language, or both (i.e. hybrid); and that response governs the language used in engaging with that party.

6.6 A new self-assessment process has been created and implemented by the WTU, in which staff assess how each tribunal complies with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. This will provide a baseline as to how each tribunal provides services to the public through the medium of Welsh and facilitates and encourages the use of the Welsh language.

6.7 A survey has also been conducted among all tribunal members to ascertain which members are able to speak the Welsh language, including members who would be able to conduct a hearing wholly or partly in the Welsh language without the use of translators. Of the 236 members of Welsh Tribunals, 60 (25.4%) indicated that they can speak Welsh, of which 43 (18.2%) indicated that they would be able to conduct a hearing in Welsh without the use of translators. The information gathered through this exercise has assisted tribunals in constituting Welsh-speaking panels when parties have indicated a wish to submit evidence wholly or partly in the Welsh language and/or speak Welsh at the hearing. It will also identify any language skill gaps in tribunal membership, which can then be addressed by training or recruitment.

6.8 Whilst each tribunal can provide both administrative services and hearings in the Welsh language, the use of the language in our tribunals is very small as can be seen from the table below.

Table 2: Hearings held in the Welsh language

Tribunal	Financial Year 2020-21	Financial Year 2021-22	Financial Year 2022-23	Financial Year 2023-24
ALTW	0	0	0	0
MHRTW	5	3	3	9
RPTW	0	0	0	0
ETW*	1	0	3	2
APW	0	0	0	0
WLT	1	0	2	2

* Formerly the Special Education Needs Tribunal Wales, renamed from 1 September 2021 by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

6.9 This reflects the position in other courts and tribunals in Wales. There is a substantial difference between the use of the Welsh language in everyday life (and, indeed, in other walks of public life) in Wales and its use in hearings in the justice system. Whilst we can speculate as to why this is so (e.g. because of the traditional use of the English language in formal settings), there are no known data which might assist in identifying the reasons for this shortfall or in addressing this issue.

6.10 From 1 April 2024, an additional, voluntary question has therefore been added to the application form in each of our jurisdictions (except, for the time being, the APW), immediately after the questions relating to language preference, to explore why those who are Welsh speaking have indicated a wish to engage with the tribunal administration and have their hearing conducted solely in the English language. The form makes clear that the response to this question will not affect the conduct of their proceedings in any way but is seeking to identify the reasons for the predominance of the English language in our tribunals. It is hoped that sufficient responses will be received to this question to allow some conclusions to be drawn, upon which we can take steps to eradicate barriers to the use of Welsh in our tribunals. This is not simply an issue about the right to use the Welsh language: such restraint may amount to a barrier to justice to those who would better present their case to a tribunal through the medium of the Welsh language.

6.11 More generally, a training session on the Welsh language and the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards was presented by WTU staff at the ALT, RPTW and ETW annual conferences, and the WTU Staff Team Training Day, which outlined the legislation and legal requirements, identifying the roles of the administration and judicial office holders in providing services in the Welsh language; and how the use of the language can in practice be facilitated and supported in the tribunal process and hearings. Further, several judges and members from the Welsh Tribunals attended a Judicial College conference designed to assist them in conducting proceedings in the Welsh language.

7 Appointments

7.1 During the financial year 2023-24, Judge Jane McConnell was appointed as the new Judicial Lead for ETW following a campaign administered by the Judicial Appointments Commission (“the JAC”). In the final quarter of 2022/23, two members of RPT were authorised to sit in ETW. In October 2023, following an exercise by way of Expressions of Interest, five legal and five lay members of the First-tier Tribunal were authorised to sit in ETW.

7.2 Following a re-run campaign administered by JAC for two salaried judges in MHRTW, I am pleased that two appointees have been identified, who will hopefully be formally appointed soon.

8 Tribunal Reform

8.1 Building on the work and recommendations of the Commission on Justice in Wales and the Law Commission, on 19 June 2023, the Welsh Government issued a White Paper, “A New Tribunal System for Wales: A modern system for Wales’s devolved tribunals”. It is unnecessary for me to summarise the work and recommendations of this important paper – it is readily available on the Welsh Government website, with a summary of responses to the paper published in January 2024.

8.2 However, the express purpose of the proposed measures are as follows:

- (a) to put in place a clearer, simpler, more effective and coherent tribunal system that is focused on access to justice and the needs of tribunal users;
- (b) to lay a solid foundation for future changes to the justice system of Wales; and
- (c) to protect judicial independence, including by giving greater structural independence to the administration of justice.

8.3 In line with those aims, the main planks of the suggested proposed reform of the Welsh Tribunals are as follows.

- (a) The creation of a unified tribunals system for devolved tribunals in Wales, comprising a first-tier tribunal (of which the current tribunals would form distinct chambers) and an Appeal Tribunal for Wales which would hear appeals from the first-tier tribunal. It is proposed to bring into that system both the Valuation Tribunal for Wales and both school admission and exclusion appeals, although not necessarily immediately.
- (b) A statutory duty to uphold judicial independence applying to those with responsibility for the administration of justice as that applies to the reformed tribunal system in Wales, i.e. the relevant Ministers and, possibly, also the members of the Senedd.
- (c) The enhancement and clarification of office and role of President of Welsh Tribunals by reference to specific statutory powers and duties such as that of presiding in the Appeal Tribunal for Wales hearings, overseeing complaints against tribunal members and determining complaints against senior tribunal judiciary, and chairing the proposed Tribunal Procedure Committee for Wales (which would be responsible for the rules of all tribunals within the proposed reformed system).

- (d) Members will continue to be selected by way of a Judicial Appointment Commission exercise; but the formality of appointments will be simplified. The Lord Chancellor will have no role. Members will generally be formally appointed by the President of Welsh Tribunals, although senior judges will be appointed by the Welsh Ministers. The President of Welsh Tribunals will become a devolved appointment.
- (e) The structural separation of the operational and administrative functions of the new tribunal system from executive functions of the Welsh Government, by the creation of a Welsh Government Sponsored Body or a Non-Ministerial Department into which the functions of the WTU would be placed, with the Chair being either a Welsh Government appointment or the President of Welsh Tribunals ex officio.

8.4 Whilst in practice there will inevitably be a vital relationship between the new body that will replace the WTU and the devolved judiciary on the one hand and the Welsh Government on the other – akin to a partnership – there is intended to be a clear separation of responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the tribunal system from the executive Government. An important function of the new body will be to monitor the performance of the tribunal system: to ensure transparency and accountability, the White Paper proposes that the body will complete a corporate plan and annual report, and that information about operational performance of the new tribunal system will be published. That information will include performance against key performance indicators which will cover such matters as the use of the Welsh language in the tribunal system, differential experiences of tribunal users from different backgrounds and the diversity of tribunal members. An important aspect of the implementation phase of the reform programme will involve consideration of how best such information can be measured and assessed in advance of the new body being operational.

8.5 I am strongly in favour of the proposed reforms, as I understand are the Judicial Leads and vast majority of tribunal members. It will be a flexible and robust tribunal system, which should serve Wales well for many years to come. In my view, if enacted and implemented with appropriate consultation and care, the reforms will benefit the tribunal judiciary (who will have a better opportunity to build a working life around sitting in our tribunals, and sit in different jurisdictions in Wales where their experience and expertise allows), the administration (which will have the benefits of scale) and it will be flexible enough to allow other jurisdictions into the system if, as and when they are devolved. Most importantly, the reformed system will give a better service to the people of Wales, whom we serve, by enabling (e.g.) better computer functions in respect of both administration and mode of hearings, and better access to local justice including justice at appellate level. The Appeal Tribunal for Wales will sit in Wales, and crucially it will allow the development of the devolved law in Wales by a tribunal based in Wales that is locally accountable. This programme will be an important step in the evolution of the justice system in Wales, and it has my full support and that of the Welsh Tribunal judiciary.

8.6 The reform programme will require primary legislation. The First Minister's annual statement on the Government's legislative programme delivered on 27 June 2023 referred to the Government's intention to bring forward legislation relating to the Welsh tribunal system during the current Senedd term. The precise timing of that legislation has yet to be confirmed, but the Welsh tribunals are working on the assumption that it will be presented in 2025 and will come into effect, hopefully, in 2026. Preparatory work continues to be done by the Justice Policy Team which, in addition to the formal consultation process through the White Paper, regularly and helpfully consults me as President and, through me, the Judicial Leads and wider tribunal judiciary.

9 The First Year

9.1 The tribunal reform programme referred to above is a unique opportunity to build a system of tribunal justice that will serve the people of Wales for years to come. However, the implementation of such a programme will give rise to substantial operational challenges for our tribunals' day-to-day business. It is therefore imperative that we ensure that each of our devolved tribunals is working on sound foundations. Building on the work of Sir Wyn Williams, the first year of my term has seen consolidation and improvements which will put us in good stead for the challenges ahead.

9.2 For that, I must thank both the tribunal judiciary (especially the Judicial Leads, upon whom much of the burden falls) and members – and, of course, Rhian Davies Rees and the Welsh Tribunals Unit staff – for both their support and their tireless work in dealing with individual cases and constantly striving to improve the systems under which we work.

9.3 I would also like to thank the Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS (First Minister for all but the last fortnight of the period covered by this Report) and Mick Antoniw MS (the Counsel General) for their thoughtful and constructive approach to the issues the devolved justice system faces in Wales; and for their support generally and, in particular, for the tribunal reform programme. I am sensitively aware of the enormous pressures on the time and resources of the Welsh Ministers and the Senedd; and am grateful that the First Minister and Counsel General clearly share my view of the importance of reforming of our devolved tribunals so that they are fit for purpose for the foreseeable future. I very much look forward to working with Mr Drakeford's successor as First Minister, the Rt Hon Vaughan Gething MS, over the coming months.

9.4 With my Judicial Leads and other members of our tribunals, I look forward to the year ahead; and to making further progress towards the improvement of the devolved justice system in Wales.



The Rt Hon Sir Gary Hickinbottom
President of Welsh Tribunals

PRESIDENT OF WELSH TRIBUNALS PRIORITIES

2023/2024

Ref.	Activity	PWT / JL / WTU
Priority A - Judicial Training		
A1	Review how training needs are identified in each devolved tribunal	PWT / JL
A2	Identify any judicial leadership training needs, and how they may be met	PWT / JL
A3	Agree what training is to be provided to the devolved tribunals and how it will be delivered	PWT / JL
A4	During 2023/24, to attend training events for each tribunal, and update members on live matters relating to the tribunals and give an opportunity to raise any questions	PWT
A5	Implement a consistent approach to evaluating training across the devolved tribunals	PWT / JL
A6	Analyse the feedback received from training evaluation process to identify further training needs	WTU
A7	Publish the yearly costs of Judicial training for each tribunal in the Annual Reports	JL / WTU
Priority B - Welsh Language		
B1	Establish the baseline for how each tribunal promotes and encourages the use of the Welsh language	PWT / JL / WTU
B2	Ensure that each tribunal has the capacity to conduct its judicial and administrative business in the Welsh language	PWT / JL / WTU
B3	Engage with service users to identify barriers to interacting with the Tribunals through the medium of the Welsh language	WTU
B4	Identify improvements that can be made and implemented within 23/24 to promote the use of the Welsh language in our tribunals	PWT / JL / WTU
B5	Deliver training to all tribunal members and WTU staff to raise awareness of the use of the Welsh language in its hearings and wider communication and the tribunals obligations within the Welsh Language Standards	PWT / JL / WTU
Priority C - Appointments		
C1	To review the diversity of existing tribunal members	PWT / JL / WTU
C2	Engage with the JAC to support delivery of a successful recruitment campaign for a new Judicial Lead in ETW	WTU
C3	Engage with the JAC to support delivery of a successful recruitment campaign for a new Judicial Lead in APW	WTU
C4	Engage with the JAC to support delivery of a successful recruitment campaign for two Salaried judges in MHRTW	WTU
C5	Lead and facilitate the induction of new Tribunal Judicial Lead and Salaried Judges (for campaigns outlined in C2, C3 and C4 above)	JL / WTU
Priority D - Tribunals Bill		
D1	Ensure full engagement with the Tribunal Reform Bill Team at every step of the tribunal reform	PWT
D2	Ensure engagement with all Judicial Leads (and, through them, appropriate engagement with users) at key stages within the tribunal reform process	PWT
D3	Ensure update on tribunal reform is communicated by the Tribunal Reform Policy team at Judicial Leads meeting	WTU
D4	Communicate to all tribunal members on the progress of the Bill at key stages	PWT / JL

PWT – President of Welsh Tribunals

JL – Judicial Leads

WTU – Welsh Tribunals Unit