



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Intergovernmental Relations Quarterly Report Quarter 1 2022

Reporting period 1 January – 31 March 2022

Reporting on intergovernmental working
between the UK Government, Welsh
Government, Scottish Government and
Northern Ireland Executive.

26 May 2022

**LEVELLING
— UP —**

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Foreword

In the first quarter of this year, the governments of the UK came together to help refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. We also came together to implement economic sanctions against Russia that applied right across the UK. The unprovoked attack on Ukraine has outraged the world and the governments of this United Kingdom have left no one in any doubt whose side we are on. The UK Government has helped to supply military and financial aid to Ukraine at the same time as we have worked with the devolved governments to establish the Homes for Ukraine scheme to help thousands of Ukrainians fleeing conflict to find accommodation across the UK.

As we started the year, we were also facing up to a rise in Omicron cases and a rise in the cost of living. Once again, we faced up to these challenges in a spirit of collaboration and that is how we will continue. We turned a corner in COVID-19 through our joint pandemic response and have now aligned our focus on recovery.

As we sought to tackle rising global inflation in March we announced measures to help people all across the UK deal with rising living costs, worth over £22 billion in total for 2022-23 to support families. This included cutting fuel duty, raising National Insurance thresholds, and doubling the Household Support Fund – £79 million of which is going to the devolved administrations.

“We turned our shared problems into shared successes, by working together.”

I published the Government's Levelling Up White Paper in February to set out how we intend to spread prosperity and opportunity across the UK over the next ten years – whether that be by boosting local productivity or improving transport links – so that the place you live no longer dictates your success in life.

We can do so much more now that the Intergovernmental Relations Review has been published at the beginning of the year. This sets out new ways of working, jointly developed by the UK Government and devolved administrations, with structures and processes for civil servants and ministers to link up and solve the pressing issues of the day. This new working arrangement builds on the regular engagement between the UK Government and devolved governments to date. The meetings, phone calls and forums that fall under this term 'Intergovernmental Relations' are all outlined in our Quarterly and Annual Transparency Reports. These reports show that when the UK Government and the devolved administrations put our heads together, we achieve so much more for our common goal; to serve and protect the people of the UK.

The Right Honourable Michael Gove MP

**Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities and Minister
for Intergovernmental Relations.**



1 January – 31 March 2022: Quarter 1 in Summary

Close collaboration between the four governments was essential during this first quarter, on areas such as the response to the war in Ukraine, COVID-19 response, delivering Net Zero, resettlement of Afghanistan refugees, and the end of the Transition Period in the UK's exit from the European Union (EU).

Set out on the next page is an analysis and snapshot of some of the meetings which took place.¹

There were a total of 110 intergovernmental ministerial meetings in Q1 of 2022.² The total number of meetings is similar to the quarterly average from last year (112).

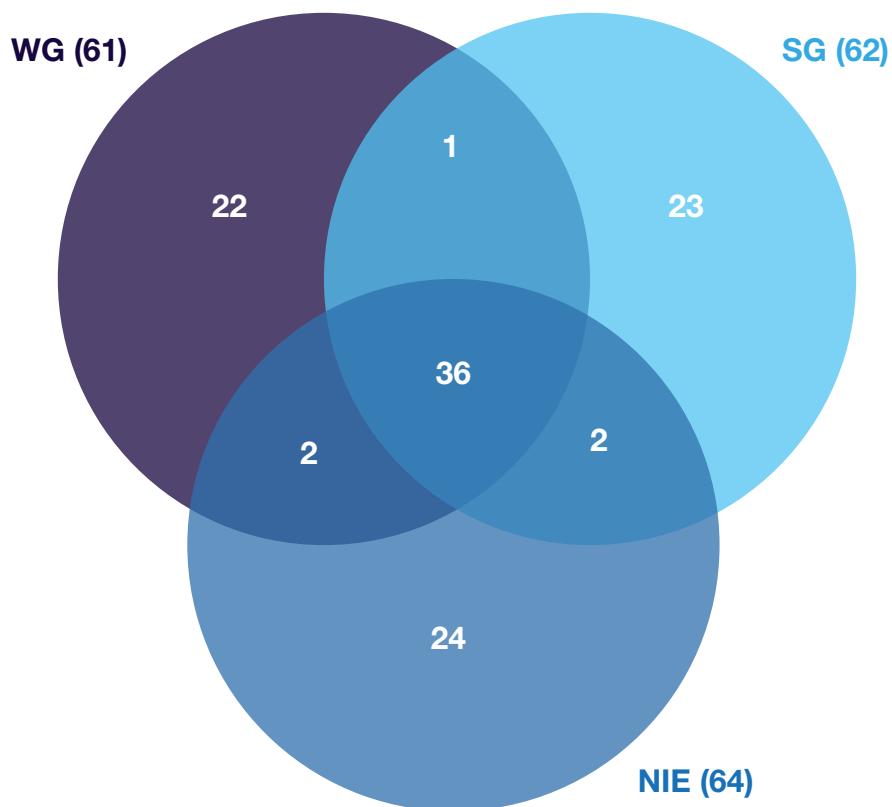
The majority of ministerial meetings were held virtually or in a hybrid format (90%), but there has been an increase in meetings held in person, compared to last year in total: four meetings were held in Belfast, two in London, two in Wales (one in Cardiff, one in Swansea), and two in Edinburgh.

¹ To note, from 11 February until the end of this quarter, the Northern Ireland Executive was not in place and, as such, senior civil servants attended in the absence of ministerial representation.

² The data was collected through a proforma completed by departments. The analysis was quality assured by an independent analyst.

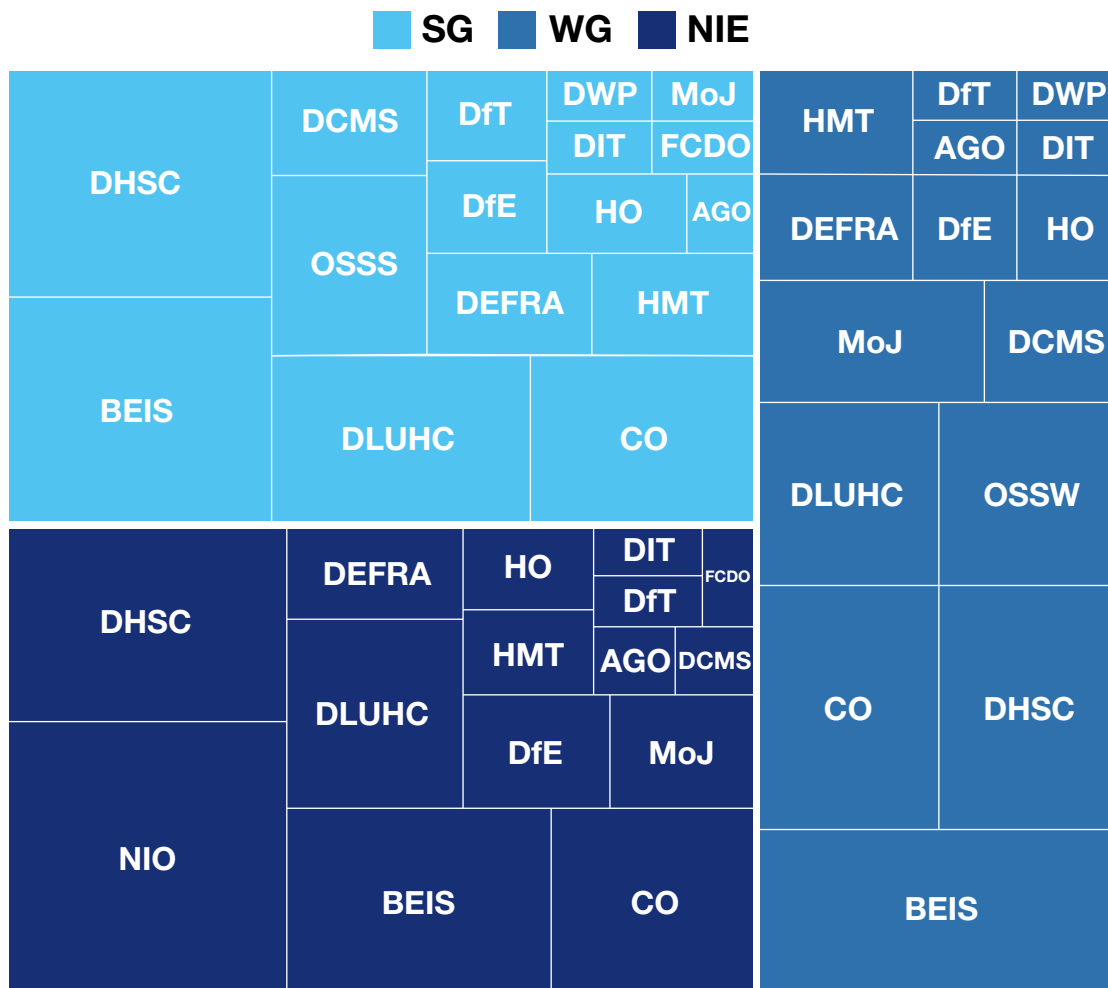
Number of meetings between UK Government (UKG) and Welsh Government (WG), Scottish Government (SG), or Northern Ireland Executive (NIE) in Q1 2022.

A total of 36 meetings took place between UKG, WG, SG, and NIE.



Number of meetings between UK Government departments and Welsh Government (WG), Scottish Government (SG), or Northern Ireland Executive (NIE) in 2022.

Multilateral meetings are counted for each government section. The size of the block reflects the number of meetings.



IGR Highlights from 2022 Quarter 1 – Case Studies

Case Study One: The UK's support to Ukraine

The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine. We have a long history of helping others in their hour of need, and this has been demonstrated once again as the four governments have come together to offer a range of economic, humanitarian and defensive support.

At the inaugural Interministerial Standing Committee in March, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, the Right Honourable Michael Gove MP, the First Minister of Scotland the Right Honourable Nicola Sturgeon MSP, the First Minister of Wales the Right Honourable Mark Drakeford MS, ministers from the Territorial Offices, and civil servants from the Northern Ireland Executive, focused on the UK's response. Ministers agreed on the priority of providing humanitarian assistance and that there had been exemplary joint-working between the governments to design and launch bespoke schemes.



Scottish First Minister the Right Honourable Nicola Sturgeon MSP with Sabir Zazai the Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council, hearing about the help offered to those arriving from Ukraine. Photo credit: the Scottish Government.

Homes for Ukraine

The establishment of the ‘Homes for Ukraine Scheme’ offers a lifeline to those forced to flee their homes, providing a route to individuals who have someone in the UK willing to provide them with a home. From the outset, the scheme was designed in collaboration with the devolved governments. Ministers met frequently to share views, concerns, and ideas to co-design the scheme. It was from these discussions that the idea of ‘super sponsorship’ developed, whereby the Scottish and Welsh governments act as a sponsor for visa applications and take on responsibility for individuals, enabling them to flex the scheme to suit each of their own systems.

There were inevitably difficulties as the processes got up and running. Data sharing, for example, proved to be a persistent teething problem. However, digital teams met daily to check that application data was reaching the devolved governments. The Home Office set up a new automated system with a faster turnaround process which incorporated feedback from the devolved administrations. The governments also held regular meetings with ministers including Lord Harrington, the Minister of State for Refugees and Kevin Foster MP the Minister for Safe and Legal Migration to work through issues. These meetings were underpinned by extensive engagement between civil servants at all levels to work through the issues.

As the scheme commenced, Cabinet Office & DLUHC Second Permanent Secretary Sue Gray met at least weekly with her counterparts in the devolved governments to discuss the challenges and possible improvements.

Civil servants worked quickly, collaboratively and openly to resolve issues and to maximise the rate of visa approvals, utilising regular cross-UK working groups, forums and ad-hoc workshops.

This close and open collaboration helped secure 20,000 applications to the scheme by the end of March.



Humanitarian Support

In early March, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP, met with devolved government ministers, as part of the regular UK Ministers Health Forum, to coordinate delivery of medical supplies to Ukraine and to treat Ukrainian children with complex care needs. Alongside this, senior civil servants from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office met with devolved government civil servants to reflect on our diplomatic response, for example the coordination of in-kind assistance through aid deliveries.

Sanctions and Security

The Paymaster General, the Right Honourable Michael Ellis QC MP, chaired six ministerial calls with the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland Executive civil servants, covering the domestic response to and impacts of the invasion. These meetings ensured a rapid and flexible response to the latest developments in Ukraine, with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, Robert Courts MP leading on the successful restriction of Russian vessels from Scottish ports. As the war in Ukraine continues, all four governments will carry on working together for the people in Ukraine.



Prime Minister the Right Honourable Boris Johnson MP with the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy on a visit to Kyiv in April 2022.

Case Study Two: IGR quarterly report for Common Frameworks

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the UK Government has been working jointly with the devolved administrations to help manage regulatory divergence across the UK in a way that works for the UK as a whole. This has led to the development of the UK Common Frameworks. There have been 15 Frameworks published on gov.uk this year alone, and all but six Frameworks are either with legislatures to undergo scrutiny or have already undergone it.

Single-use Plastics

The UK Internal Market (UKIM) Act 2020 protects the ability for people and business to trade freely with each other across the UK. However, in some circumstances, the need for UK-wide regulations is balanced with the recognition that these rules should not unreasonably frustrate the policy aims of individual governments. One recent example of this concerns single-use plastics, like straws and cotton buds.

Following a request from the Scottish Government, ministers from the UK Government and the devolved governments, and civil servants operating under the provisional Resources and Waste Common Framework, considered the case for an exclusion to the UKIM Act that would ensure that single-use plastics that are banned in Scotland cannot be sold there. Ministers across the four governments, given their shared ambition to tackle plastic pollution across the UK, agreed

“Ministers across the four governments, given their shared ambition to tackle plastic pollution across the UK, agreed that an exclusion in this case would be appropriate, and the legislation to make this happen is now under development.”

that an exclusion in this case would be appropriate, and the legislation to make this happen is now under development. This demonstrated that the Common Framework will help to ensure that the Scottish Government's environmental policy aims are not undermined by UK-wide regulation.

Repeal of EU (Withdrawal) Act section 12 'freezing' powers

Similarly, the UK Government has worked closely with the devolved administrations on repealing powers in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

Under the Act, the UK Government had the option to 'freeze' certain legislation in devolved competence, to ensure that law was consistent across the UK. These powers expired on 31 January 2022. The UK Government did not exercise the freezing powers at any point, which reflects the effective collaborative basis on which both the UK Government and devolved governments had approached the Common Frameworks and regulatory divergence.

The UK Government met regularly with devolved government counterparts regarding the intention to repeal these powers, and laid a draft statutory instrument on 25 January to formally repeal the freezing powers, which came into effect on 31st March. The repeal marks the progress we have made together with the devolved governments to develop UK Common Frameworks on a collaborative basis.

IGR activity (1 January – 31 March 2022)

The first three months of 2022 saw a steady stream of engagement between the UK Government and devolved administrations across several key policy areas.

Health and COVID-19 Recovery

Although COVID-19 restrictions have reduced across the UK as our joint pandemic responses prove effective, engagement across the governments has nevertheless continued apace. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, supported by the Secretaries of State for the Territorial Offices, continued to hold regular calls with the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, to collaborate and coordinate responses to COVID-19. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care met regularly with devolved government health ministers, discussing issues such as on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccines, the National Testing Programme including testing resilience, capacity and, more recently, the future of testing policy, COVID-19 certification, antivirals and therapeutics. The Chief Medical Officers met on key programme boards within the UK Health Security Agency, as well as discussions led by Dr. Jenny Harries, to coordinate the respective test, trace, contain, and protect programmes.



*Welsh First Minister the Right Honourable Mark Drakeford MS at a COVID-19 memorial woodland in Caerphilly.
Photo credit: Huw Fairclough for Caerphilly County Borough Council.*

The UK Government continues to provide support across a wide range of areas. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Right Honourable Simon Clarke MP, chaired a meeting between the finance ministers to discuss continuing support for the COVID-19 response. The Right Honourable Nadhim Zahawi MP, the Secretary of State for Education, chaired the first and virtual UK Education Ministers Council in January, where ministers presented their strategic priorities for education, which included supporting learners and families in education through the pandemic. Robin Walker MP, Minister of State for School Standards, and Michelle McIlveen MLA, the Minister of Education in Northern Ireland met to discuss COVID-19 and the impact of the Omicron variant on schools.



The Business and Industry Interministerial Group met in February, and focused on the challenges facing the retail and hospitality sectors as they recover from COVID-19, with the discussions also covering the implications of the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper. The Minister for the Arts, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, chaired the UK Culture Ministers meeting in January to discuss recovery in the arts and cultural sectors. Lord Wolfson of Tredegar QC, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Justice, met with devolved governments to discuss the remote hearings and other digital ways of working post COVID-19 pandemic.

There has also been significant engagement on wider health and social care policy areas outside of the COVID-19 response, for example around the Health and Care Bill between Minister of State at the Department of Health and Social Care Edward Argar MP and devolved government health ministers. This engagement has been crucial to address the concerns raised by health ministers across the UK. Other ministerial engagements included Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Technology, Innovation and Life Sciences Lord Kamall leading discussions on life sciences, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Patient Safety and Primary Care Maria Caulfield MP chairing the first UK Menopause Taskforce meetings.

Engagement also continues as part of the UK Government's commitment to support the safe and secure transfer of certain disability benefits to the Scottish Government. Chloe Smith MP, the Minister for Disabled People, met with Ben Macpherson MSP, on the launch of Adult Disability Payment in Scotland.

Delivering Net Zero

After the successful hosting of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, the UK Government continues to work with the devolved administrations to meet commitments towards Net Zero. In February, the COP26 President, the Right Honourable Alok Sharma MP, chaired a meeting with devolved government ministers which reflected on the success of COP26 and discussed priorities for the UK COP Presidency year, as part of joint efforts for the whole UK to work together to tackle climate change. There were also two meetings of the Net Zero, Energy and Climate Change Interministerial Group to discuss the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Ministers agreed to consult stakeholders on their views on proposals to develop the UK ETS. This is part of the continuing focus on BEIS' key priorities – including delivering Net Zero, unleashing innovation, supporting businesses, and backing long-term growth.

The Interministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA) discussed joint working between DEFRA and the devolved administrations on the role of improved data and how this could support tackling health, environment, and animal welfare challenges within the food system.

They also discussed the UK Government's recently published Nature Green Paper for England, which aims to support the ambition to restore nature and halt species decline. Key aspects of the paper include a coherent framework for protected sites and delivery arrangements.

In February, the Right Honourable Greg Hands MP, Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth & Climate Change, and Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, in the Scottish Government, jointly chaired the British-Irish Council Energy work sector ministerial meeting. This brought together ministers from across the UK, Ireland and Crown Dependencies, to consider how they can continue to work together to address shared challenges such as a climate change, energy efficiency and energy security.

Finance and investment

In March the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Right Honourable Simon Clarke MP, chaired the inaugural meeting of the Finance Interministerial Standing Committee, attended by the finance ministers from the devolved administrations, providing a new forum for discussion on finance matters. Ministers discussed a wide range of key issues, such as the Spring Statement and cost of living, end of year budgetary communications, levelling up, the UK Infrastructure bank and P&O Ferries. Alongside this, the UK Government and Scottish Government met twice to discuss the Shared Prosperity Fund and cross-UK investment opportunities.



Secretary of State for Health and Social Care the Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP, Prime Minister the Right Honourable Boris Johnson MP, and Chancellor of the Exchequer the Right Honourable Rishi Sunak visit Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire.

In February, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury attended a Joint Exchequer Committee meeting with the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Kate Forbes MSP, to discuss plans for the upcoming review of the Scottish Government's Fiscal Framework, as well as financial impacts relating to the income tax personal allowance.

Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government's Northern Ireland Office met in relation to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Sir Peter Hendy's Connectivity Review on how best to deliver these programmes for the benefit of people in Northern Ireland.

Business, industry, and jobs

Minister for Industry, Lee Rowley MP, met devolved ministers at the Business and Industry Interministerial Group, where meetings focused on the challenges of recovering from COVID-19, the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper, the Welsh Government's Plan for Employability and Skills, as well as the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on businesses across the UK. Lord Callanan, Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, met his counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive and the Scottish Government to focus on the Economic Crime Bill. George Freeman MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, discussed the independent Research, Development and Innovation Landscape and Bureaucracy Reviews, and participation in EU programmes; including Horizon Europe; Copernicus; Euratom Research & Training; and Fusion for Energy.

"The Interministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs met to discuss the impacts on global supply chains and commodity prices, and potential ways to help mitigate impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

Mims Davies MP, the Minister for Employment, met with Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Economy in Wales, to discuss joint working opportunities, particularly in respect of the Welsh Government's forthcoming Employability Strategy, and Sector Based Work Academy Programmes.

The UK Government has also worked with Scottish and Welsh Governments on boosting digital connectivity. The Minister of State for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure,

Julia Lopez MP, had bilateral meetings with Kate Forbes MSP, the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, and with Lee Waters MS, the Welsh Deputy Minister for Climate Change, to discuss Project Gigabit rollout and delivery.

The Interministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs also met to discuss the impacts on global supply chains and commodity prices, and potential ways to help mitigate these impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They also discussed the situation with P&O ferries, and the likely impacts that this would also have on global supply chains, as well as ways to mitigate the impact on people across the UK. Ministers recognised the need to ensure effective and timely data, which would allow all administrations to quickly identify and react to emerging issues wherever possible. Ministers also discussed joint working between DEFRA and the devolved governments on the role of improved data and how this could support tackling health, environment, and animal welfare challenges within the food system.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart MP, met with Ivan McKee MSP, the Scottish Government Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise in February to discuss the ways in which the UK and Scottish governments can work together to support the space sector in Scotland.

Delivering cultural programmes across the UK

The UK and Ireland continue to consider a joint bid to host the UEFA European Championships in 2028 (EURO 2028) – as part of a partnership of five football associations and five government authorities. The Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Nigel Huddleston MP, met with the lead ministers on the bid from the devolved governments (and the Government of the Republic of Ireland) which updated on progress towards submitting an Expression of Interest to UEFA. This provided an opportunity for all ministers to share the latest position of their respective governments, and for the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments (along with the Government of Ireland) to ultimately agree to move forward collectively to support the five football associations in submitting an expression of interest on 23 March 2022 to host EURO 2028.

The UK Culture Ministers meeting in January shared updates on preparations for the upcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations, the Commonwealth Games,



UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, and marking 75 years of the Edinburgh Festivals. Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Minister for Arts, attended the Edinburgh International Culture Summit (EICS) diplomatic briefing and London launch. The UK Government is an equal partner in the Summit along with the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, the British Council and Edinburgh International Festival.

David TC Davies MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales, and the First Minister of Wales both attended the opening of Swansea's 3,500 capacity Digital Arena in March. This project has been part-funded by the £1.3 billion Swansea Bay City Deal, a joint agreement between the UK Government, the Welsh Government and local partners. The Arena will attract visitors, provide a great leisure destination and support jobs and opportunities post COVID-19 recovery.

"This provided an opportunity for the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments (along with the Government of Ireland) to ultimately agree to move forward collectively to support the five football associations in submitting an expression of interest on 23 March 2022 to host EURO 2028."

Safety and Security

UK Government Ministers have engaged regularly with the devolved governments on the expediting Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act 2022. Shortly before the UK Government took the Act through Parliament, the Minister of State for Security and Borders, the Right Honourable Damian Hinds MP, met with his counterparts to brief them on the content and purpose of the then Bill, and to seek their support in passing an Act quickly through the Houses. These meetings were positive, and resulted in a commitment to work together to ensure parity of the law in Northern Ireland and Scotland and seek legislative consent motions for provisions that relate to devolved matters.

In January, the Minister of State for Afghan Resettlement, Victoria Atkins MP, held meetings with devolved government ministers to discuss the Afghan Resettlement Scheme, providing an update on the current position and reflecting on the process so far. The meeting helped facilitate further detailed discussions on the policy between civil servants, with close working to assist in resettling Afghan nationals as part of the ongoing Scheme.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, the Right Honourable Dominic Raab, led discussions with ministers and stakeholders in Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast which focussed largely around the Bill of Rights, intended to ensure the balance between the rights of individuals, national security, and effective government.

International issues

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has continued to work with the devolved governments both in the UK and overseas, and across a wide range of international facing issues. This has included visits made by devolved government ministers to Ireland and the postponed 2020 Dubai Expo, where civil servants worked together to facilitate and support these overseas visits.



The UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.

This first meeting of the UK-EU Relations Interministerial Group took place in February and discussed the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation agreement, chaired by the Right Honourable Michael Ellis QC MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and attended by Neil Gray MSP, the Scottish Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, and Northern Ireland Executive Junior Minister Gary Middleton MLA. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Brandon Lewis CBE MP, and the Minister of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Conor Burns MP, met regularly with ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss the Northern Ireland Protocol and the importance of maintaining a functioning Northern Ireland Executive. The Ministerial Forum for Trade met to discuss updates across various Free Trade Agreement negotiations (in particular the UK-Canada negotiations), and the important role of devolved administrations in the funding of disputes.

Further to this, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Lord Offord of Garvel, chaired two further meetings of the Scottish Seafood Industry Action Group in February and March. The meetings were attended by Mairi Gougeon MSP, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands and the group discussed a range of issues, including digitisation of the export certification process and concerns regarding labour shortages in the sector.

More widely, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean) Vicky Ford MP, also met with representatives from the Turing Trust in Edinburgh, which seeks to use technology to empower disadvantaged communities, to hear about how funding from the FCDO has supported the charity's work in Malawi.

Annex A – Glossary of abbreviations for UK Government Departments

AGO	Attorney General's Office	DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
CO	Cabinet Office	FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	HO	Home Office
DfE	Department for Education	MoD	Ministry of Defence
DfT	Department for Transport	MoJ	Ministry of Justice
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care	NIO	Northern Ireland Office
DIT	Department for International Trade	OSSS	Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland
		OSSW	Office of the Secretary of State for Wales

