

Terms of reference for the Interministerial Group for Work and Pensions held bilaterally with the Welsh Government

Purpose and Scope

1. The bilateral Interministerial Group for Work and Pensions (the 'Group') provides a forum for the UK Government and Welsh Government to discuss matters of mutual interest in the fields of employment, disability, social security, child maintenance and pensions. It operates within the context of the existing devolution settlement between the UK and the Welsh Governments.
2. The Group is designed to complement inter-governmental structures and will adhere to the [Review of Intergovernmental Relations](#).

Membership

3. The members of the Group are:
 - Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, HM Government
 - Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip, Welsh Government
4. Other relevant ministers may be invited on an ad hoc basis, depending on the agenda. The secretariat should be notified of any absence at the earliest opportunity and, in such cases, members will be expected to nominate a suitable delegate to attend in their place.

Hosting and Frequency

5. Meetings of the Group will be biannual, with the option to meet more or less frequently if required.
6. Meetings will be held virtually by videoconference and organised by the chairing administration. Where desirable and beneficial, the group may hold meetings in person.
7. Meetings will be organised and supported by a secretariat formed of officials from both administrations.

Chairing and Secretariat

8. HM Government will chair the first meeting of the Group and chairing will alternate between the administrations thereafter.
9. Each administration will designate a nominated official to act as a member of the secretariat. The nominated official will be responsible for:
 - leading the logistics work when that member is hosting a meeting of the Group
 - liaising with nominated officials from other members on all matters
 - coordinating the drafting and clearance of the agenda and supporting papers

- hosting an official-level meeting ahead of the Group meeting to discuss and agree the agenda and other matters
 - issuing the agenda and papers three to five days prior to the meeting, unless agreed otherwise
10. The chairing administration will be responsible for circulating draft communiques following the meeting, ahead of final sign off by both administrations prior to publication.
 11. DWP will be responsible for publishing communiques on GOV.UK in line with the Review of Intergovernmental Relations 2022. The Welsh Government, in accordance with the [Inter-Institutional Agreement with the Senedd](#), will issue a letter to the relevant Senedd Committees outlining the meeting and provide the published GOV.UK link to the communique.

Information Handling

12. Discussions will take place in a confidential setting, but will be noted and a jointly agreed communique published following the meeting.
13. No information relating to discussions will be shared with third parties unless agreed jointly. This includes sharing of meeting papers and responding to media enquiries.
14. Confidential and/or sensitive material will be treated appropriately.
15. All meeting papers will be shared with the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales.

Resolution process

16. The Group will attempt to avoid and resolve any potential disputes at portfolio level. However, as a last resort, and if necessary, the Group will adhere to the processes set out in the Review of Intergovernmental Relations.

Review Requirements

17. The Terms of Reference for the Group will be amended as appropriate to reflect any changes to the role and functions of the Group, subject to agreement from both administrations.
18. The terms of reference represent an agreement between the Welsh and HM Governments and will remain in place unless and until the group agrees any changes. The terms of reference will be kept continuously under review and assessed for effectiveness on an annual basis. Any changes will be agreed jointly by consensus.