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Making a positive difference  
for energy consumers



Wales foreword | 2022-23

# Wales foreword

## Martin Cave

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Chair



Ofgem has continued to expand the number of colleagues based in Cardiff with the need to expand the amount of office space beyond Tŷ William Morgan hub. This expansion highlights the commitment and the opportunities available in Wales, with roles now being routinely advertised in Cardiff.

Jonathan Brearley and I visited in November to see the team and how it's grown and visit the office centre of Cardiff. When we visited we met with National Energy Action to learn more about the increasing pressures facing consumers. The increasing presence and visits have meant we have continued to grow our engagement with stakeholders in Wales. I also had a very interesting conversation with Warm Wales a charity that has a team of trained energy advisors and community workers who provide advice and referrals to hear about difficulties consumers were having.

Ofgem's Communications team similarly manages a significant programme of engagement activity to ensure Ofgem's voice is heard in Wales, and that Wales's voice is heard within Ofgem. They have implemented the use of the Welsh Language to ensure that communications are available in Wales in both languages.

In January I was invited to speak at Policy Forum Wales.

It was a panel event focusing on the next steps for renewable energy in Wales policy priorities, rollout, new projects, future role in the energy mix, local systems, planning, infrastructure, and connections. There was an interesting discussion and questions about the need for offshore wind development in the Celtic Sea and elsewhere.

The GEMA board held a meeting in Cardiff in February and went on on-site visits in South Wales for the first time since Covid. It was interesting to be back and we managed to have an interesting afternoon. The board had a productive meeting with Tata Steel in their Port Talbot site to learn more about the work they are doing to improve and maintain production and move towards greener technology.

The board met with the leader of Bridgend County Council to discuss the work they have been trialling on plans to use Hydrogen as a fuel for the local bus network. They are trialling new hydrogen technology and have been piloting the use of Hydrogen on a small scale in domestic homes. There is much good work happening as the Welsh government looks to new Wales to meet its Climate change commitments.

The board was able to meet with the Minister for Social Justice Jane Hutt MS, in the event that the First Minister was unable to join us on this occasion.

Alongside this, our CEO Jonathan Brearley has been in regular contact over the past year with the Ministers for Climate Change and the Minister for Social Justice regarding the crisis in the energy market and the changes to the price cap whilst Ofgem officials have met regularly with members of the Welsh Government to keep them updated as events relating to energy prices were unfolding. Ministers have rightly raised some of the issues of higher rates of deprivation and more people in Wales on lower incomes and using prepayment meters. This means that rising costs have affected people in Wales more than other areas of the UK.

Ofgem has been able to meet with Ministers and Members of the Senedd as required to ensure we are listening to issues raised and able to offer updates and clarity when needed. This has meant a closer working relationship which we hope to build on with the senior team working closely with Welsh Government going forward. This includes bilateral meetings, events at the Welsh Parliament, site visits, conferences, and quarterly roundtable meetings with BEIS's devolved nations team.

There have been significant challenges facing the energy sector this year. Ofgem has acted quickly to protect consumers. I'm happy that work has already started and we will continue to work hard ahead of this coming winter to ensure customers are not let down again.

