



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
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Dear Michael

UK Covid Inquiry – Wales

Thank you for taking time to meet me in the margins of our joint appearance at the British-Irish Association conference in Oxford, last weekend.

As I explained, I believe a UK-wide Covid inquiry is the best option to properly – and openly – scrutinise the decisions made by the Welsh Government and other public sector organisations in Wales during the pandemic. In my view this will also be the best way in which Wales can learn important lessons for the future.

The Welsh Government and public bodies here have, of course, made decisions for Wales in what we believe were – and are – the best interests of the country. At times our decisions have varied significantly from decisions made elsewhere in the UK. However, the broad context for our decision-making has been inextricably linked to consideration of the wider UK science and policy landscape.

For example, SAGE advice, the UK chief medical officers' network, Treasury and UK Government support measures have all set the parameters within which decisions made in Wales by the Welsh Government have been made.

I want to be very clear that the Welsh Government's decisions – and those taken by other relevant bodies in Wales – should be scrutinised in a very full and comprehensive manner. I do not want Wales to be an after-thought or footnote to the UK inquiry. For the UK inquiry to have credibility in Wales, where there are currently many calls for a separate Welsh inquiry, it is important it proceeds in a way which allows it to focus discretely on Wales as part of its

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

remit. This will require visibility – the inquiry team should come to Wales to take evidence, it should have Welsh-specific expertise available to it, and it will be important to produce Welsh chapter/s as part of the report so that citizens here can reflect transparently on the Wales narrative and conclusions.

In our discussion you indicated you broadly agree with the position I set out and have distilled here.

The challenge is to ensure that the inquiry's terms of reference, membership, resourcing and methodology is capable of delivering against political and public expectations in Wales. I would strongly advocate a collaborative process between the UK Government and the Welsh Government, and the others nations, of course, in drawing up comprehensive terms of reference and practical remit instructions.

It would be helpful to hear your thoughts on the best way we can work together to take this forward.

I am copying this letter to Sue Gray in the Cabinet Office, who helpfully joined our meeting in Oxford.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK DRAKEFORD