

**Wales Race Forum - Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of
Wales engagement session**

11:00 – 11:45, Thursday 20 October 2022

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice (Chair)
Albert Owen
Aled Edwards, CYTUN
Andrew Ogun, BLM Gwent
Dr Anwen Elias
Bethan Phillips, Welsh Government
Carys Evans, Welsh Government
Gareth Morgan, Welsh Government
Heulwen Mai Vaughan, Welsh Government
Kay Denyer, Race Council Cymru
Kirsty Williams
Laura McAllister, Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales
Leanne Wood
Maria Mesa, Women Connect First
Professor Sir Michael Gideon Marmot
Miguela Gonzalez, Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales
Patrick Daly, Welsh Government
Paul Webb, Welsh Government
Professor Robert Moore, NWREN
Professor Uzo Iwobi CBE, Race Council Cymru
Riaz Hassan, Welsh Government
Rob Milligan, Tai Pawb
Rod Hough, Welsh Government
Rowan Williams, Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales
Ruth Leggett, Welsh Government
Shahien Taj, Women Connect First
Tessa Hajilambi, Welsh Government

Item 1 – Welcome and introductions

1. Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice, thanked Wales Race Forum members for joining and extended a warm welcome to the Commissioners.

Item 2 – Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales Overview

2. There is a sense the UK Government is not delivering for the people of Wales. The Union is fragile, with the pressure in Scotland and Ireland shaping the territory we find ourselves in.
3. Part of the Commission's function is that it must have a response ready for any crises that arise. Although the feeling in the Commission is that it must look positively at what works for Wales – not just respond to crises.
4. The Commission is engaged in pattern of ongoing engagement, to which it is deeply committed.
5. In 12 months, the Commission will have produced a report. The report will set out the kind of values upon which any consultation reforms should be based; it will be one which gives a realistic account of what the constitutional options are; it will reflect the problems faced by people in their day-to-day lives.
6. The Commission is in the process of finalising interim report and it is hoped this will be available for public comment/consultation in December. The interim report will flag up pressure points, values and constitutional options.
7. While drafting the report, the conversations the Commission have had with stakeholders have been expansive. Conversations so far have been led by the elite and it is crucial we hear from people like members of Senedd. That is why the interim report should and will contain representation of all parties in the Senedd and professionals from sectors such as health, education etc.

Item 3 – Discussion and questions

8. In terms of values, those we had in 1997 are still solid: equal opportunities, human rights and sustainable development among others. These values informed the way in which difficult conversation took place in the past and also informed a powerful social partnership model.
9. Working with smaller groups and communities to look at what problems we face and how to solve them has been valuable in the past. A prime example of this way of working is the report on the disproportionate affect Covid 19 had on people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, which was issued under the chairmanship of Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna. This process of collaboration must continue.

10. Other examples of the value provided through working closely with partners include the housing of asylum seekers in Pembrokeshire and the civic response to the asylum crisis following the fall of Kabul.
11. The constitutional model we have now is not working. There must be a fundamental look at the machinery. A constitutional provision which makes the delivery of services easier and better, without the sense of being hindered or restricted by a constitutional model which is no longer pertinent, is needed.
12. While conversations on constitutional matters have been led by the elite, they have also been led by South Wales. The interests of others, such as North Wales, must feature in discussions.
13. For the first time, a Minister – the Minister for Social Justice – held meetings with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities around Wales. These are voices which are seldom heard; the struggles faced by their communities are too often not accounted for.
14. Through the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, we are driving change to right these wrongs. The Commission is invited to review this document to see how we're taking in to account these voices – it is completely different to the Sewell report.
15. Perhaps it is time for the Commission to do a similar round robin trip so it can hear the grassroot groups and give them a voice?
16. It is vital these grassroot groups are well resourced to ensure their voices are heard.
17. Data sharing needs to be a big consideration.
18. The Commission would like to canvass opinions on how the Senedd and the Welsh Government represents communities, and feedback on this is welcome.
19. There are many communities who don't necessarily understand the structure and the powers of the Senedd/Welsh Government. This process is an ideal opportunity for us to ensure they're better informed.

Item 4 – Closing remarks and further action

20. The Minister thanked attendees for joining the meeting and for their useful contributions.