



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Responses to consultation on proposals to develop an Act on the interpretation of Welsh legislation

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Most legislatures across the Commonwealth have enacted rules on how their legislation operates and is to be interpreted. However, the National Assembly for Wales (unlike each of the other UK legislatures) has not yet done so. Instead the interpretation of Welsh legislation is governed by the Interpretation Act 1978, an Act of the UK Parliament. That Act is nearly 40 years old, is in English only (including definitions that apply across the statute book) and is not as clear and accessible as it could be.

The Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee of the Fourth National Assembly recommended that the Government should develop a bespoke Welsh interpretation Act as a means of improving understanding of Welsh legislation. As part of the Welsh Government's wider programme of improving accessibility to Welsh law, and in response to the Committee's recommendation, my predecessor published a consultation on such a proposal earlier this year. The consultation closed in September and I am pleased to issue a summary of responses to that consultation today.

We received 17 written responses from across the UK from legal professionals, the judiciary, academics, individuals and the third sector. I am grateful to everyone who responded to the consultation and generously shared their knowledge and experience of the current legislative framework. I am pleased that the respondents are supportive of the principle of creating bespoke, bilingual statutory interpretation provisions for Wales.

I have found the responses particularly helpful in identifying areas where it will be important to maintain some consistency with the existing arrangements; and where there are opportunities for innovation by making changes to better reflect Wales' constitution. In line with my programme for improving the accessibility of Welsh law, I am keen to provide clarity and certainty for users of Welsh legislation so that they can access and use it with confidence.

The consultation responses represent a valuable source of views, information and ideas

which will inform the development of statutory interpretation provisions for Wales. I will provide a further update on our work in this area in due course.

The summary of the consultation responses is available here:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/interpreting-welsh-law-interpretation-act-wales>

<https://ymgyngoriadau.llyw.cymru/ymgyngoriadau/dehongli-cyfreithiau-cymru-deddf-dehongli-i-gymru>