



Department for
International Trade



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Lord Purvis of Tweed
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17th November 2021

Dear David and Jeremy,

Professional Qualifications Bill: engagement with the devolved administrations

Thank you for your thoughtful and constructive contributions to the debate on the Professional Qualifications (PQ) Bill. I am writing to clarify the details of the engagement activity conducted with the DAs in relation to the PQ Bill and regarding the request for DA-BEIS correspondence to be published in the Parliamentary Library. These points were raised by both of you at Report Stage on 9 November.

My officials and I have engaged extensively with the DAs on the Professional Qualifications Bill. I have met all my ministerial counterparts and their predecessors, on a total of five separate occasions, to provide an overview of the Bill and discuss any areas of concern. My officials also work closely with their official counterparts in the devolved administrations and hold regular meetings with them. I know that they have already held meetings with each of the devolved administrations following Report stage to discuss next steps to securing legislative consent.

We have been open and transparent with the DAs from the outset and shared early drafts of the Bill, Explanatory Notes, and supporting documents. Communication channels are well established, and we have been open to discussing possible approaches to amending the Bill to meet concerns they have raised.

At every stage of the Bill's development and, indeed, its passage through Parliament, my officials have engaged with the devolved administrations. I was pleased that all three of the devolved administrations contributed to the department's Call for Evidence which ran from August to October 2020.



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My officials and I have also engaged with a range of devolved regulators such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland, Law Society of Scotland, Social Care Wales and the Education Workforce Council and always keep DAs informed of, or in some cases directly involved in, these interactions.

I was disappointed that both the Welsh Government and Scottish Government have so far declined to grant legislative consent motions (LCM) for the Bill. I hope that we can continue to engage and persuade them of the merits of the government's approach.

I am attaching to this letter a summary of engagement with the devolved administrations inclusive of both ministerial and formal official level activity. At Report Stage you mentioned that the Constitution Committee would welcome such a document and I am therefore happy for this letter to be shared with the Committee for their views. You will appreciate that some of this engagement was held in confidence, and I would therefore be grateful if you do not circulate this further.

Finally, we cannot oblige on your request for my correspondence on the Bill to be shared to the parliamentary library. These letters often include matters wider than the PQ Bill as well as details of ongoing LCM negotiations. I would not want to break any confidences with the DAs, nor would I want to set a precedent for other Bills to provide this.

I am firmly committed to our Union and to a partnership of the nations that form it. As I made clear at Report Stage, the government will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations as the Bill progresses through Parliament to try to secure their support for granting legislative consent.

A copy of this letter will be deposited in the libraries of the House.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
Minister for Investment
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Table outlining engagement with Devolved Administrations to date on the Professional Qualifications Bill

The table below outlines high-level official and ministerial business in chronological order as of February 2021, when pre- Bill engagement initially began.

Engagement summary	Date (2021)	Level of engagement	DAs involved
Letter from Wales Education Minister, Kirsty Williams MS to SoS Kwasi Kwarteng – outlined WG views on the Bill and asked for formal consent. This also asked for movement on a Recognition of Professional Qualifications (RPQ) Common Framework.	12 Feb	Ministerial	Wales
Letter from SoS Kwasi Kwarteng to Kirsty Williams MS – in response to letter dated 12 February. This provided reassurance that BEIS would continue to engage with WG throughout and outline the role of RPQ Common Framework in relation to the Bill.	1 March	Ministerial	Wales
Ministerial bilat with Wales Education Minister, Kirsty Williams MS to discuss PQ Bill provisions	23 March	Ministerial	Wales
Due to purdah (starting on 9 April) for elections in May, Scottish and Welsh ministerial engagement was put on hold during this period, until DA ministerial portfolios were confirmed. Engagement continued at official level.			
Letter from Nichola Mallon MLA to Lord Grimstone – regarding the timing and contents of the proposed PQ legislation.	7 April	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Draft PQ Bill shared with DAs	14 April	Officials (via email)	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Ministerial Bilat with Diane Dodds MLA to discuss PQ Bill provisions	14 April	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Second draft PQ Bill shared with DAs, along with the impact assessment and explanatory notes	22 April	Officials (via email)	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Senior officials meeting with SG – to discuss and provide reassurance on SG concerns around concurrent powers.	28 April	Officials	Scotland
Letter from Lord Grimstone to Nichola Mallon MLA – Response to letter dated 7 April	29 April	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Ministerial Roundtable with Legal Regulators on PQ Bill with regulators - attended by Law Society Scotland, Law Society NI.	5 May	Ministerial, Officials, regulators	Scotland, Northern Ireland
Senior officials meeting with NICS – provided an overview of all clauses in the Bill	6 May	Officials	Northern Ireland
Ministerial Roundtable on PQ Bill with healthcare, education and veterinary sectors regulators - attended by Institute for Chartered Accountants Scotland (ICAS)	10 May	Ministerial, Officials, regulators	Scotland



Letter to DA Ministers asking for LCM in principle	11 May	Ministerial	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Policy statement, summary of responses to the RPQ Call for Evidence, and technical guidance for regulators in relation to recognition arrangements shared with DAs	12 May	Officials	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Letter from Diane Dodds MLA to Lord Grimstone in response to LCM in principle letter	26 May	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Letters to DA Minister updating them on Clause 1 amendment – outlined the amendment which aims to enhance regulator autonomy over the recognition of overseas qualifications.	26 May	Ministerial	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
Webinar on the PQ Bill - attended by GTCS, Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Officials from all DAs were invited and attended.	27 May	Officials, regulators	Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland
Meeting with DA lawyers – discussion on BEIS devolution analysis.	3 June	Officials	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
Letter from Ivan McKee MSP to Lord Grimstone in response to the LCM in principle letter	7 June	Ministerial	Scotland
BEIS DA Forum – update on bill timings and on official and Ministerial DA engagement.	10 June	Officials	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
Letter from Lord Grimstone to Ivan McKee MSP - in response to his letter on 7 June	11 June	Ministerial	Scotland
Letter from Jeremy Miles MS to Lord Grimstone – on devolution analysis.	17 June	Ministerial	Wales
Ministerial Bilat with Ivan McKee MSP – introductory meeting to provide overview of bill and discuss any concerns.	21 June	Ministerial	Scotland
Letter from Paul Frew MLA – Requesting an introductory meeting. Due to ministerial changes in NIE this meeting could not take place.	21 June	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Letter from Lord Grimstone to Jeremy Miles MS - Response to the letter dated 17 June	8 July	Ministerial	Wales
Letter from Welsh Counsel General, Mick Antoniw to Baroness Bloomfield – on amendment 56a (requesting the removal of clause 14(5) and (6)).	8 July	Ministerial	Wales
Webinar to provide overview of the PQ Bill – All DAs were invited. SG & WG attended.	13 July	Officials, regulators	Scotland, Wales
Letter from Baroness Bloomfield to Welsh Counsel General, Mick Antoniw – response to letter dated 8 July.	14 July	Ministerial	Wales
Ministerial Bilat with Jeremy Miles MS – introductory meeting to provide overview of bill and discuss any concerns	19 July	Ministerial	Wales
DA regulator Roundtable, chaired by Baroness Bloomfield to provide overview of Bill - attended	20 July	Ministerial, regulators	Scotland, Northern



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by: Social Care Wales, Health and Safety Authority for NI, Bar of NI, ICAS, SSSC, Department for Infrastructure (NI), Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Faculty of Advocates (FoA), Chartered Accountants Ireland (CAI). Relevant DA officials were invited.			Ireland, Wales
Official-level engagement on the list of devolved professions and regulators	26 July - 14 October	Officials, regulators	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Common Frameworks – Scoping Workshop	10 Aug	Officials (BEIS and devolved administrations)	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Webinar on clauses 7-10 on the Bill - following feedback that further clarity was needed especially on the information sharing clauses. All DAs were invited. Attended by Social Care Wales, Law Society of Scotland, Chartered Accountants Ireland, Bar of NI.	17 Aug	Officials, regulators	Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
Letter from Lord Grimstone to DA Ministers regarding the list of professions & regulators to which the PQ Bill applies	26 Aug	Ministerial	Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland
Ministerial Bilat with NIE Minister for Economy, Gordon Lyons MLA - introductory meeting to provide overview of bill and discuss any concerns.	31 Aug	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
WG Officials questioned BEIS on the Bill's relationship with the devolution settlement	1 Sept	Officials (Via email)	Wales
Draft text of a DA consultation and regulator autonomy amendments shared with DA officials	7 Sept	Officials	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Letter from Ivan McKee MSP to Lord Grimstone regarding the list of professions & regulators stating SG is content	9 Sept	Ministerial	Scotland
Meeting with NICS officials to discuss draft amendments	9 Sept	Officials	Northern Ireland
Meeting with SG officials to discuss draft amendments	9 Sept	Officials	Scotland
Letter from Gordon Lyons MLA to Lord Grimstone regarding the list of professions & regulators stating NIE is content.	9 Sept	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Ministerial meeting with Baroness McIntosh and Scottish Legal Regulators and SG officials	10 Sept	Ministerial, BEIS and SG officials, regulators	Scotland
Letter from Jeremy Miles MS to Lord Grimstone regarding the list of professions & regulators stating WG is content	16 Sept	Ministerial	Wales
Seminar on PQ Bill for transport regulators – attended by Dept. for Infrastructure NI, Health and	17 Sept	Officials, regulators	Northern Ireland



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Safety Executive NI and Driver & Vehicle Agency NI			
Meeting with SG officials to discuss amendments	21 Sept	Officials	Scotland
Written confirmation from SG on their position on amendments	23 Sept	Officials	Scotland
Meeting with WG officials to discuss amendments	22 Sept	Officials	Wales
First meeting with the Regulated Professions Advisory Forum (RPAF) – Devolved regulator members are: Law Society of Scotland, Law Society of NI, Bar of Northern Ireland Pharmaceutical Society of NI, General Teaching Council for NI, Education Workforce Council, General Teaching Council for Scotland, NI Social Care Council, ,	27 Sept	Ministerial, regulators, BEIS, DIT and DA officials also attended	Scotland
First draft of RPQ Common Framework (based on joint workshop discussions held on 10 Aug) sent to DAs for views	28 Sept	Officials	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Minister Rowley meeting with Vaughan Gething MS – introductory meeting	29 Sept	Ministerial	Wales
Draft Regulatory Consultation Amendment shared with DAs	30 Sept	Official	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Paul Scully Quad Meeting – routine Ministerial meeting with DA counterparts. PQ Bill was discussed.	8 Oct	Ministerial	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Lord Grimstone sends out letter offering DA consultation amendment and requesting support for LCM.	12 Oct	Ministerial	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
The list of professions & regulators was shared with DA officials and regulators	13 Oct	Officials, regulators	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales
Ivan McKee MSP responded to LCM offer.	19 Oct	Ministerial	Scotland
Gordon Lyons MLA responded to LCM offer - He wrote that he would consider official's analysis and make a recommendation to the NIE in the coming days.	19 Oct	Ministerial	Northern Ireland
Workshop to finalise the draft of the CF - The workshop continued to facilitate the development of the CF.	20 Oct	BEIS and DA Officials	Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland
Email to DAs sharing the final draft CF text and an outline of timeframe	20 Oct	Officials	Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland
Jeremy Miles MS responded to LCM offer.	28 Oct	Ministerial	Wales



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DA Education Roundtable – Lord Grimstone met with GTCS and EWC to discuss issues with the Bill. Relevant DA officials were invited.	28 Oct	Ministerial, officials, regulators	Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland
PQ Bill factsheets shared with DA officials and regulators	3 Nov	Officials	Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland
Discussion following Report stage on next steps towards securing LCMs	10 Nov	Officials	Wales
Discussion following Report stage on next steps towards securing LCMs	10 Nov	Officials	Scotland
Discussion following Report stage on next steps towards securing LCMs	11 Nov	Officials	Northern Ireland