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Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS
First Minister of Wales
Welsh Government

Our reference: MC2020/07740

22 July 2020

Per Mrk,

Thank you for your letter of 12 June. I would like to apologise for the delay in responding. Many thanks also for the constructive conversation we had earlier this month in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As I noted in that discussion, I will follow up with further thoughts on how to articulate joint objectives as we respond to the coronavirus, and on working more closely on managing local outbreaks.

During the most acute phase of the Covid-19 response, we have worked strongly together demonstrating the importance of close joint cooperation. From mid-March, devolved administration representatives attended 40 meetings of the General Public Services Ministerial Implementation Group, eight meetings of the Economy and Business Response Implementation Group and nine meetings of the Health Ministerial Implementation Group. There were many further discussions and calls at ministerial and official level. I would like to put on record my thanks to you, your colleagues and your officials.

Although we are now in a different phase of our Covid-19 response and the Ministerial Implementation Groups have been replaced by new committees, I agree that regular engagement between the UK Government and the devolved administrations is crucial in making sure that people, businesses and communities across the UK are supported through Covid-19. Our engagement has continued at a significant pace in recent weeks, framed by the importance of continuing to drive forward a UK-wide approach to resolve this crisis.

I see our regular discussions with the other leaders of the Devolved Administrations as an important channel for this engagement, which I am committed to maintaining. These calls would continue to be joined by all First Ministers, including the deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as UK Government Secretaries of State for Territorial Offices. I suggest we do these roughly fortnightly, allowing for flexibility when appropriate. We will speak this Friday and, I suggest, in the second week of August. I would also be keen to have the opportunity to speak to you further, when convenient, to discuss your suggestions for improving our joint working.

Continued ministerial engagement on different aspects of the UK Government's response to the pandemic, including the four nations health ministers calls chaired by the Health Secretary, and the regular Business Ministers quadrilateral forums, remains critical to a coordinated UK approach. Regular discussions between the four Chief Medical Officers also continue to facilitate the sharing of scientific advice, as does the significant ongoing official-level engagement between UKG departments and their DA counterparts.

I look forward to our continued collaboration on suppressing the virus while minimising the economic and social effects. I am copying this letter to the Welsh Secretary.

With every good wish,

Personal Data

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Minister for the Cabinet Office**