

Press release: UK and Welsh governments reach agreement on EU Withdrawal Bill

The UK Government and the Welsh government today confirmed that they have reached an agreement on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill that will be tabled in the UK Parliament tomorrow and that means the Welsh Government will now recommend that the National Assembly for Wales pass a Legislative Consent Motion for the Bill.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington MP welcomed the agreement saying it was a 'significant achievement that will provide legal certainty, increase the powers of the devolved legislatures and also respect the devolution settlements.' The Minister said that the Government would now table amendments to the Bill on Wednesday along with the publication of a related Inter Government Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding.

The EU Withdrawal Bill will significantly increase the powers of the devolved administrations in the UK as powers currently controlled by the EU are returned to the UK. The UK Government has been in detailed discussions with the devolved administrations for some time now about putting in place the necessary arrangements for the 153 policy areas returning from the EU to Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast in a way that strengthens and respects the devolution settlement but also protects the vital UK internal market.

The deadline for tabling changes to Clause 11 of the Bill at the House of Lords Report stage is tomorrow (Wednesday). No agreement has been reached with the Scottish Government.

The UK Government had already proposed changes to the Bill that mean the vast majority of EU powers that intersect with devolved competences will go directly to the devolved parliaments and assemblies when we leave the EU. There would also be a provision for the UK Government to maintain a temporary status quo arrangement over a small number of returning policy areas where a new UK framework had not been implemented in time for EU Exit. This is to protect the UK internal market and ensure no new barriers are created within the UK for consumers and businesses.

David Lidington said:

I am very pleased that the many months of detailed negotiation have got us to a point where we have now reached an agreement with the Welsh Government on changes to the Bill. This is a significant achievement that will provide legal certainty, increase the powers of the devolved governments and also respect the devolution settlements. The UK Government has made considerable changes to the EU Withdrawal Bill to address issues that have been raised in

Parliament and by the devolved administrations

It is disappointing that the Scottish Government have not yet felt able to add their agreement to the new amendments that Ministers and officials on all sides have been working on very hard over recent weeks. I thank them for that effort and hope that they may still reconsider their position. All governments agree that it would be best for all parts of the UK if we had an agreed way forward on the EU Withdrawal Bill.