



BRIEFING PAPER

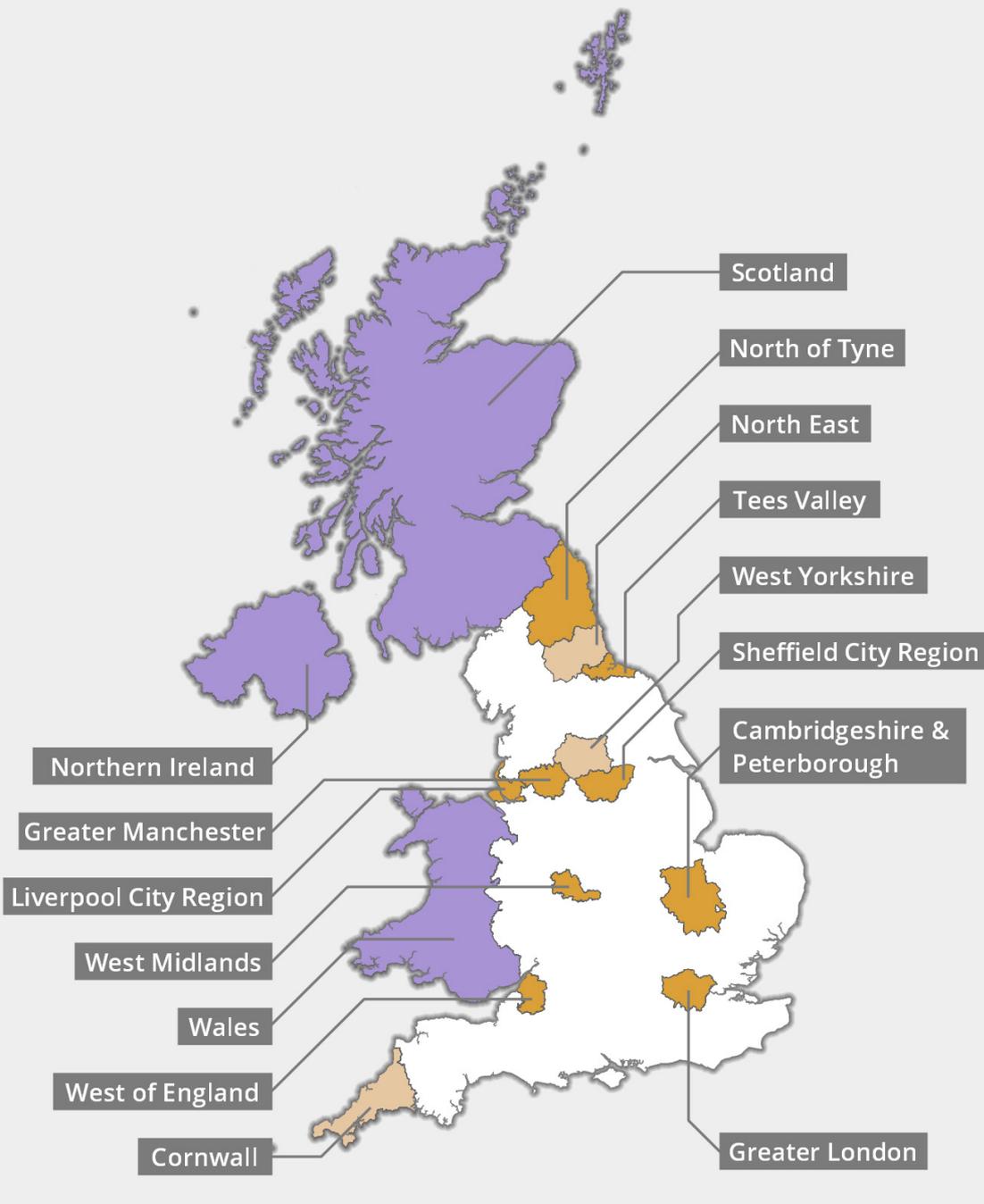
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Introduction to devolution in the UK

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Summary

“Devolution” is the term used to describe the process of transferring power from the centre to the nations and regions of the United Kingdom. The term is derived from the Latin, meaning “to roll down”.¹

It is different from a federal or confederal system of government, under which every constituent part of a state enjoys autonomy and sovereignty. Under the UK constitutional tradition of “parliamentary sovereignty” devolution is, in theory, reversible, and the devolved institutions products of UK statute.

The legislative frameworks for devolution was originally set out in the *Scotland Act 1998*, the *Government of Wales Act 1998* and the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*, although all three have subsequently been amended. There is also a non-legislative framework of agreements between Government departments and the devolved institutions which help resolve disputes between central and devolved government.

The UK system of devolution is asymmetric, in that different parts of the UK have different forms of devolution and varying degrees of power. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland now all possess executive and legislative devolution, while Metro Mayors in parts of England (and the Mayor of London) have only executive powers. Combined Authorities and the London Assembly can scrutinise executive decisions but not legislate in the manner of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Those three legislatures can only pass primary and secondary laws in devolved (or “transferred” in the case of Northern Ireland) areas, with “reserved” matters (or reserved *and* “excepted” in NI) remaining the responsibility of Westminster. The UK Parliament can still legislate in devolved areas, but, under the Sewel Convention, does “not normally” do so without the explicit consent of the relevant devolved body.

Prior to the 1997 referendum on devolving power from Westminster to Wales, the then Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, memorably referred to devolution as “a process, not an event”.² This briefing paper looks at both the “event” of devolution in 1997-99 and the “process” of its development since then, outlining the structure and powers of devolved institutions in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London and parts of England. It also includes suggestions for further reading.

¹ James Mitchell, “Devolution” in D. Brown, R. Crowcroft and G. Pentland (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern British Political History, 1800-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p187.

² “Return of the Welsh Nation”, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 12 September 1997.

1. Introduction

Devolution in the United Kingdom did not begin in the late 1990s. Rather it has taken many forms in Scotland, Wales and Ireland (later, Northern Ireland) since the 18th century:

- **administrative** – the practice of transferring central government responsibilities to territorial departments of the same government;
- **executive** – where the prerogative powers of the UK Government are transferred to ministers of devolved governments or, in England, elected “metro” mayors;
- **legislative** – where law-making powers are transferred from Westminster to other legislatures within the UK.

The application of these different forms of devolution has often reflected the composite nature of the UK which, as Professor James Mitchell has argued, has never been unitary but “a state of unions”.³

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland developed over several centuries, first through [England’s union with Wales](#) (in the 1530s), then the [Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707](#) (which formed Great Britain), and the [British-Irish Union of 1801](#) (which formed the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland). Its current geographical extent is less than a century old, a result of the secession of the Irish Free State in 1922.

Even the old English state had a regional dimension, with [Councils of the North](#) (1472-1641), [the West](#) (1539-40) and [Wales and the Marches](#) (1472-1689).⁴ Between 1603 and 1707, Scotland and England each had their own [parliaments under the same monarch](#), while until 1801 Ireland also had its own legislature, although it was constrained in many ways by England/Great Britain. After 1707, the Scottish church and legal system retained institutional autonomy, while Ireland, after 1801, had a form of executive devolution within the Union.

In the late 19th century a system of what was known as “administrative devolution” began to apply, first in Scotland (1885), then in Wales (1964-65) and, finally, Northern Ireland (1972), the last of which followed more than 50 years of legislative devolution. Referendums on devolving certain powers to Scotland and Wales in 1979 failed to achieve the necessary threshold of public support. Attempts to restore legislative (and executive) devolution in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and ‘80s proved short-lived.

The devolution settlements associated with the Labour Government of 1997-2001 drew on aspects of these earlier schemes, while executive devolution was granted to London for the first time in 2000. Devolution to parts of England, meanwhile, only began in earnest after 2015.

³ James Mitchell, *Devolution in the UK*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p15. Mitchell has subsequently revised this to argue that “the UK might best be characterised as a state of evolving unions” (Mitchell, “Devolution”, p187).

⁴ None of these Councils were legislative in nature; their purpose being more judicial.

2. Devolution in Scotland

2.1 Establishment

A [Scottish Home Rule Association](#) was formed a year after the Scottish Office opened in 1885, and for the next century it and several other organisations, movements and political parties proposed schemes ranging from “Dominion” status for Scotland within the British Empire, to “devolution” via a Scottish Assembly or Parliament in Edinburgh.

A [Royal Commission on the Constitution](#), which reported in 1973, recommended a directly-elected Scottish Assembly to deal with most domestic Scottish affairs.

1979 devolution referendum

The [Scotland Act 1978](#) gave legislative effect to this proposal, subject to a post-legislative referendum which was [held on 1 March 1979](#). The Act included an electoral threshold known as the “40 per cent rule”, which required 40 per cent of the total Scottish electorate (rather than of those voting) to endorse the proposals.

Although 51.6% of those voting supported a Scottish Assembly, that threshold was not met and thus the [Scotland Act 1978](#) was subsequently [repealed following a vote in Parliament](#). Thereafter, organisations like the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly continued to campaign for devolution.

In 1989 a [Scottish Constitutional Convention](#) was convened to agree a blueprint for what was by then generally referred to as a Scottish Parliament (rather than an Assembly). This emphasised the “sovereignty of the Scottish people”, although as the academic James Mitchell later observed, this [Claim of Right for Scotland](#) embodied “a political rather than justiciable claim”.⁵

1997 devolution referendum

In 1995, the Labour Party committed to a pre-legislative two-question referendum on establishing a Scottish Parliament with tax-varying powers. Two years later, the Labour Party won the 1997 UK general election and passed the [Referendum \(Scotland and Wales\) Act 1997](#), which made legal provision for a non-binding two-question referendum.

Unlike the [Scotland Act 1978](#), it did not include a turnout threshold. On 11 September 1997, when the referendum was held, 74% of voters agreed there should be a Scottish Parliament, while 63% agreed it should have tax-varying powers. The turnout was 60.4%.⁶

The Government’s White Paper, [Scotland’s Parliament](#) (Cmnd 3658), had been debated in the Commons on 31 July 1997.⁷

⁵ [Written evidence submitted by Professor James Mitchell \(CC 21\)](#), 17 October 2012. While the Scottish Labour and Liberal parties took part in the SCC, the Scottish Conservatives and SNP did not.

⁶ See Commons Library Research Paper 97/113, [Results of Devolution Referendums \(1979 & 1997\)](#), 10 November 1997, pp6 & 9.

⁷ [HC Deb 31 July 1997 vol 299 cc456-52](#)

2.2 Devolved powers in Scotland

The [Scotland Act 1998](#) (as amended in 2012 and 2016) sets out matters on which the [Scottish Parliament](#) *cannot* legislate, known as **general** and **specific reservations**. The **general reservations** are:

- aspects of the constitution, including the Crown, the Union, the UK Parliament, the existence of the (criminal) High Court of Justiciary and the existence of the (civil) Court of Session;
- the registration and funding of political parties;
- international relations, including with territories outside the UK and the European Union, international development and the regulation of international trade;
- the Home Civil Service;
- defence of the realm;
- treason.

Specific reservations cover particular areas of social and economic policy reserved to Westminster. These are listed under 11 “heads”:

- Head A – Financial and Economic Matters (fiscal – except devolved taxes – economic and monetary policy, currency, financial services, financial markets, money laundering);
- Head B – Home Affairs (misuse of drugs, data protection and access to information, elections to the House of Commons, firearms – except air weapons – entertainment, immigration and nationality, scientific procedures on live animals, national security, official secrets and terrorism, betting, gaming and lotteries, emergency powers, extradition, lieutenancies and access to non-Scottish public bodies);
- Head C – Trade and Industry (business associations, insolvency, competition, intellectual property, import and export control, sea fishing outside the Scottish zone, consumer protection, product standards, safety and liability, weights and measures, telecommunications, postal services, research councils, designation of assisted areas, industrial development and protection of trading and economic interests);
- Head D – Energy (electricity, oil and gas, coal, nuclear energy and energy conservation);
- Head E – Transport (road transport, marine transport and air transport);
- Head F – Social Security (non-devolved social security schemes, child support and pensions);
- Head G – Regulation of the Professions (architects, health professions and auditors);
- Head H – Employment (employment and industrial relations, health and safety, non-devolved job search and support);

- Head J – Health and Medicines (xenotransplantation, embryology, surrogacy and genetics, medicines, medical supplies and poisons, welfare foods);
- Head K – Media and Culture (broadcasting, public lending right, government indemnity scheme and property accepted in satisfaction of tax);
- Head L – Miscellaneous (judicial remuneration, non-Scottish public body equal opportunities, control of weapons, Ordnance survey, time, outer space and Antarctica).

[Schedule 5](#) of the *Scotland Act 1998* (as amended) gives a detailed and up-to-date breakdown of all general and specific reservations, as well as various exceptions. Everything not listed is assumed to be devolved.⁸

2.3 The Scottish Parliament

The single-chamber Scottish Parliament can pass primary legislation. The debating chamber is arranged in a hemicycle. There is no second, or “revising”, chamber. It currently operates a five-year sessional cycle, rather than the annual (or occasionally two-year) cycle used at Westminster.

Even before the Scottish Parliament moved to its custom-built home opposite the Palace of Holyroodhouse in 2004, it was often referred to as “Holyrood”, which is widely used as shorthand for the devolved Parliament, just as “Westminster” is for the UK Parliament.

Parliamentary governance

The Scottish Parliament is governed by [Standing Orders](#) and a [Corporate Body](#), which is responsible for providing the necessary property, services and staff. The Corporate Body is chaired by the [Presiding Officer](#), who also convenes the [Parliamentary Bureau](#), which allocates time and sets the work agenda in the Chamber (unlike the House of Commons, where the Government sets the business). The Bureau consists of one representative from each political party – or groupings of smaller parties and individuals – with five or more seats.

Elections

Under the *Scotland Act 1998*, ordinary elections for the Scottish Parliament were held on the first Thursday in May every four years, before moving (like the [Welsh Parliament](#)) to temporary five-year terms after the 2011 election.⁹

The date of the poll may be varied by up to one month either way by the Sovereign on the proposal of the Presiding Officer. A vote by two thirds of the parliament’s members can dissolve the parliament,

⁸ See Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8544, [Reserved matters in the United Kingdom](#), 5 April 2019, for a full list of matters which remain reserved to the UK Parliament.

⁹ The [Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011](#) created a UK parliamentary term of five years and thus moved the date of the next Scottish Parliament election to 5 May 2016 to avoid a clash with a UK election then due in 2020. The [Scottish Elections \(Dates\) Act 2016](#) then extended the Scottish Parliamentary term from four to five years, so that the next election could be held on 6 May 2021, with subsequent elections taking place every four years.

resulting in an extraordinary election which are in addition to ordinary elections unless held six months before the due date, in which case they supplant it.

Elections to the Scottish Parliament are conducted under the proportional [Additional Member System](#) (AMS), which produces 73 constituency and 56 regional list [Members of the Scottish Parliament](#) (MSPs). Until the reduction of Scottish MPs to 59 in 2005, constituency seats at Holyrood and Westminster were coterminous (except for Orkney and Shetland). The regional list MSPs are selected from eight regions based on the former European Parliament constituencies (Central Scotland, Glasgow, Highlands and Islands, Lothian, Mid Scotland and Fife, North East Scotland, South Scotland and West Scotland).

Each political party draws up a list of candidates to stand in each electoral region, from which the list MSPs are elected. Taking account of the constituency vote, these 56 list seats are then allocated proportionately using a system based on the [d'Hondt method](#) (the Welsh Parliament uses the same system). Those standing for places on the regional lists can also stand in constituency seats falling within that electoral region.¹⁰

As with all elections in the UK, citizens of Ireland and qualifying Commonwealth countries resident in Scotland are entitled to vote in Scottish Parliament elections, as are citizens of other EU member states (which is not the case at Westminster). Overseas voters on the Scottish electoral register are not entitled to vote. From the 2016 Holyrood election, the franchise was expanded to include 16- and 17-year olds (who had also been able to vote in the 2014 independence referendum).

By-elections for constituency MSPs are held in a manner similar to those for MPs, while on the regional list a departing Member is replaced by the next person on his or her party list. If there is no one else on the list, as was the case when the independent MSP Margo MacDonald died in April 2014, the seat is left vacant until the next Scottish Parliament election.¹¹

There are no legal restrictions on MSPs also being members of the House of Commons, House of Lords or European Parliament. Many MPs who were elected MSPs in 1999, for example, remained MPs until 2001, while Alex Salmond, First Minister between 2007-14, remained an MP until 2010.¹²

First meeting following an election

It has become a custom that the Queen “opens” each new session of the Scottish Parliament.

¹⁰ In the Welsh Parliament, by contrast, dual candidacy has always been restricted and was banned outright at the 2007 and 2011 elections.

¹¹ BBC News online, [“Independent MSP Margo MacDonald dies”](#), 5 April 2014.

¹² See Commons Library Briefing Paper SN04101, [Members of Parliament holding dual mandates](#), 26 September 2017, and Scottish Parliament Fact sheet, [MSPs with Dual Mandates](#), 5 December 2017.

Following an election, the previous term's Presiding Officer presides over the swearing-in of MSPs, who are required to [swear an oath of allegiance or make a solemn affirmation](#) to the Sovereign. A new Presiding Officer is then elected in a secret ballot, followed by two deputies.

Any MSP can stand for nomination as [First Minister](#) although, as at Westminster, this will normally be the leader of the largest single party.¹³ Once nominated, he or she is then recommended by the Presiding Officer and appointed by the Queen. The new First Minister then selects Ministers who (with the exception of two law officers) have to be MSPs.¹⁴ Another plenary session votes on the First Minister's appointees.

If the Scottish Parliament fails to nominate a First Minister within 28 days of a vacancy arising, then [Section 46](#) of the *Scotland Act 1998* stipulates that another election must be held.

Plenary sessions

The Scottish Parliament typically sits on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from early January until late June, and from early September until mid-December, with a two-week recess in April and October, and a week in February. It generally conforms to "family-friendly" hours, i.e. there are no late-night sittings.

Since 27 October 1999, the first item of business each week has been [Time for Reflection](#), which, unlike prayers in the House of Commons, is ecumenical. MSPs vote (electronically) on all motions and amendments moved during a plenary meeting at [Decision Time](#), which usually takes place at 5pm. After Decision Time on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and following First Ministers Questions on Thursdays, there are 45 minutes of Members' Business. The [Official Report](#), like Hansard at Westminster, is the published record of parliamentary proceedings.

MSPs can debate and vote on motions concerning reserved matters, but not legislate for them.

Committees

The Scottish Parliament has a [committee system](#), although this does not distinguish between standing and select committees, as in the UK Parliament. Seven "[mandatory](#)" committees are set out in the Scottish Parliament's Standing Orders.¹⁵

The committees undertake scrutiny of both legislation and policy and can initiate their own inquiries in relevant subject areas. Like committees of the House of Commons, those in the Scottish Parliament can meet in other locations. UK Ministers often appear before Scottish Parliamentary committees but are not obliged to do so.

¹³ The election of a First Minister can be delayed if coalition negotiations are ongoing.

¹⁴ The Lord Advocate and Solicitor General may attend and speak in plenary meetings of the Scottish Parliament but cannot vote.

¹⁵ These committees are: Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments, Finance, Public Audit, Europe and External Relations, Equalities, Public Petitions and Delegated Powers and Law Reform.

2.4 How legislation is passed

The Scottish Parliament makes laws on what are known as [devolved matters](#). Public Bills can be introduced by a backbench MSP, known as [Members' Bills](#),¹⁶ by a Cabinet Secretary or Minister (a Government Bill) or proposed by a Scottish Parliament committee (a Committee Bill). [Private Bills](#) can also be initiated by external promoters.¹⁷

Bills are then examined by the Scottish Parliament, mostly via committees, with one committee taking the lead. Before it can become law, a Bill has to pass three main stages:

- **Stage 1:** Parliamentary committees consider the “general principles” of a Bill and consult members of the public and external stakeholders. MSPs then debate and vote on the Bill in the Chamber;
- **Stage 2:** A parliamentary committee considers the Bill in detail and decides on proposed changes, or amendments.
- **Stage 3:** Parliament considers further amendments to the Bill and, finally, MSPs decide whether to pass or reject it.¹⁸

Before Stage 1, the Presiding Officer has to give their opinion on whether a Bill is within the Scottish Parliament’s competence, although this is not binding on the Scottish Government.

Once a Bill is passed, there is a period of four weeks in which the [Advocate General for Scotland](#) (a UK Government law officer) can either refer it to the Supreme Court on the basis that it is incompatible with either the *Scotland Act 1998* or the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), or confirm s/he does not intend to. Only then does the Presiding Officer write to the Queen asking for [Royal Assent](#).

[Section 35](#) of the *Scotland Act 1998* also empowers the [Secretary of State for Scotland](#) to prevent Royal Assent being given to a Bill in certain circumstances, although this power has never been used.

Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8441, [“The settled will”?](#) [Devolution in Scotland, 1998-2018](#), has fuller details regarding the background and development of the devolution settlement in Scotland.

¹⁶ Each MSP can introduce two Member’s Bills during a parliamentary session.

¹⁷ Only one [Hybrid Bill](#) has so far been considered, to authorise the building of a new Forth crossing by the Scottish Government because it affected people and bodies near the proposed bridge.

¹⁸ Scottish Parliament website, [“How does the Scottish Parliament make laws?”](#)

3. Devolution in Wales

3.1 Establishment

Political demands for Welsh autonomy were first articulated in the late 19th century,¹⁹ while in 1949 an advisory [Council for Wales and Monmouthshire](#) was appointed with the task of ensuring that the Government were “adequately informed of the impact of government activities on the general life of the people of Wales”.²⁰

A [Minister of Welsh Affairs](#) was created in 1951, while in October 1964 this became a Cabinet post as Secretary of State for Wales. A related department, the Welsh Office, was established the following year with a presence in Whitehall and Cardiff. This form of “administrative devolution” gradually acquired greater responsibilities, as in Scotland.²¹

1979 devolution referendum

In 1974, the Labour Government published proposals for a directly elected assembly in Wales with executive but not legislative powers.²² As with proposals for a Scottish Assembly, this was subject to a post-legislative referendum, which took place on 1 March 1979, St David’s Day. Only 20.3% of the Welsh electorate voted affirmatively, and so the [Wales Act 1978](#) was repealed by the successive Conservative administration.²³

1997 devolution referendum

In opposition during the 1990s, the Labour Party produced proposals for a Welsh Assembly – again with executive rather than legislative powers – in two documents, *Shaping the Vision* (1995) and *Preparing for a New Wales* (1996).²⁴ In June 1996, the party also committed itself to holding a pre-legislative referendum and, following the 1997 general election, it published a White Paper, *A Voice for Wales*, on 22 July 1997.²⁵

A referendum was held on 18 September 1997 – a week after the vote in Scotland – and the result was a narrow “yes” vote, 50.3% or 559,419 votes, a majority of just 6,721.²⁶

3.2 Devolved powers in Wales

The original devolution settlement in Wales under the [Government of Wales Act 1998](#) did not equip the then National Assembly for Wales

¹⁹ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: A History of Modern Wales 1880-1980*, 1987.

²⁰ Alan Butt-Phillip, *The Welsh Question*, 1975.

²¹ Russell Deacon, *The Governance of Wales: The Welsh Office and the Policy Process 1964-99*, 2002.

²² See House of Commons Library Research Paper 97/60, [Wales and devolution](#), 19 May 1997, pp5-7.

²³ David Foulkes *et al*, *The Welsh Veto: The Wales Act 1978 and the referendum*, 1983.

²⁴ Several commentators believed this form of devolution, weaker than that proposed for Scotland, was the result of divisions among Welsh Labour MPs (see Martin Shipton, *Poor Man’s Parliament*, 2011, p8).

²⁵ HMSO, *A Voice for Wales: The Government’s Proposals for a Welsh Assembly*, 1997.

²⁶ Fred Till, [“20 years that changes Wales: reflections on ‘Wales said Yes’”](#), Institute of Welsh Affairs website, 26 September 2017.

with primary law-making powers, and therefore most policy areas (beyond executive and secondary law-making powers) remained under Westminster control.

Following a cross-party campaign for Wales to gain legislative powers, [part 3](#) of the *Government of Wales Act 2006* granted the ability to pass “Assembly Measures” (primary laws) in 20 defined areas (set out in [Schedule 7](#)) via “Legislative Competence Orders”. These required the consent of both Houses of Parliament as well as the [Secretary of State for Wales](#).

In 2014, the [Silk Commission](#) argued that the National Assembly should move to a reserved powers model,²⁷ a view endorsed by the UK Government the following year.²⁸ [Schedule 7A](#) of the *Wales Act 2017* (which was also added to the 2006 Act), followed the Scottish precedent in dividing reservations into **general** and **specific** areas.

General reservations largely follow those in Scotland (with the important exception of justice). They are:

- the Constitution;
- public service;
- political parties;
- the single legal jurisdiction of England and Wales;
- tribunals;
- foreign affairs etc;
- defence.

Specific reservations, again like those in the *Scotland Act 1998*, are divided into several “Heads”, but are more extensive than those in Scotland. These are:

- Head A – Financial and Economic Matters (fiscal – except devolved taxes – economic and monetary policy, currency, financial services and markets, dormant accounts);
- Head B – Home Affairs (elections, nationality and immigration, national security and official secrets, interception of communications, communications data and surveillance, crime, public order and policing, anti-social behaviour, modern slavery, prostitution, emergency powers, extradition, rehabilitation of offenders, criminal records, dangerous items, misuse of drugs or psychoactive substances, private security, entertainment and late night refreshment, alcohol, betting, gaming and lotteries, hunting, scientific and educational procedures on live animals, lieutenancies, charities and fund-raising);
- Head C – Trade and Industry (business associations and business names, insolvency and winding up, competition, intellectual property, import and export control, consumer protection,

²⁷ Commission on Devolution in Wales, [Empowerment and Responsibility: Legislative powers to strengthen Wales](#), Cardiff, March 2014, chapter 4.

²⁸ HM Government, [Powers for a Purpose: Towards a Lasting Devolution Settlement for Wales](#), Cmnd 9020, February 2015, para. 2.1.2.

product standards, safety and liability, weights and measures, telecommunications and wireless telegraphy, post, research councils, industrial development, protection of trading and economic interests, assistance in connection with exports of goods and services, water and sewerage, Pubs Code Adjudicator and the Pubs Code, Sunday trading);

- Head D – Energy (electricity, oil and gas, coal, nuclear energy, heat and cooling, energy conservation);
- Head E – Transport (road transport, rail transport, marine and waterway transport etc, air transport, transport security and other matters);
- Head F – Social Security, Child Support, pensions and Compensation (social security schemes, child support, occupational and personal pensions, public sector compensation, Armed Forces compensation etc);
- Head G – Professions (architects, auditors, health professionals and veterinary surgeons, employment, employment and industrial relations, industrial training boards, job search and support);
- Head J – Health, Safety and Medicines (abortion, Xenotransplantation, embryology, surrogacy and genetics, medicines, medical supplies, biological substances etc, welfare foods, health and safety);
- Head K – Media, Culture and Sport (media, Public Lending Right, Government Indemnity Scheme, property accepted in satisfaction of tax, sports grounds);
- Head L – Justice (the legal profession, legal services and claims management services, legal aid, coroners, arbitration, mental capacity, personal data, information rights, public sector information, public records, compensation for persons affected by crime and miscarriages of justice, prisons and offender management, family relationships and children, gender recognition, registration of births, deaths and places of worship);
- Head M – Land and Agricultural Assets (registration of land, registration of agricultural charges and debentures, development and buildings);
- Head N – Miscellaneous.²⁹

Schedule 7A gives a detailed breakdown of all general and specific reservations, as well as various exceptions to those reservations, which are therefore devolved.³⁰

3.3 Senedd Cymru/the Welsh Parliament

Senedd Cymru/the Welsh Parliament has 60 Members of the Senate (MS) consisting of 40 constituency representatives and 20 representing five multi-member regions. Regional members are elected, as in

²⁹ Welsh Parliament website, [“Role of the Senedd and how it works-Powers”](#)

³⁰ Again, see Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8544, [Reserved matters in the United Kingdom](#), for a full list of matters which remain reserved to the UK Parliament.

Scotland, via the Additional Member closed-party-list system to ensure a high degree of proportionality *vis-à-vis* total votes cast.

Following each election, which since 2011 are held every five years, the Parliament elects one of its Members to serve as [Presiding Officer](#) (Llywydd) and another to serve as a deputy. The Presiding Officer also chairs the [Welsh Parliament Commission](#). Both the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer are expected not to vote.

The [First Minister of Wales](#) is directly appointed by the Queen (who also “opens” each new session) following a vote in the Parliament, and if no candidate is elected within 28 days of polling day, then fresh elections are necessary. The Welsh Parliament meets in plenary every Tuesday and Wednesday, as well as in several committees, of which there are currently 13.³¹

Since 2006, the Welsh Parliament has been based at the custom-built “Senedd” (Welsh for “Parliament”) building in Cardiff Bay. Some call it the “the Senedd”, while “Cardiff Bay” is also used as shorthand for Wales’ governing institutions, like “Westminster” and “Whitehall” in London.

Following a public consultation, legislation to change the name of the National Assembly to “Welsh Parliament” in English and “Senedd Cymru” in Welsh was passed by Assembly Members on 27 November 2019 and given Royal Assent on 15 January 2020. The name change took effect on 6 May 2020.³²

3.4 How primary legislation is passed

As with other legislatures in the United Kingdom, proposed legislation in Wales is known as a “Bill” until it becomes an “Act” following a five-stage process:

- **Stage 1:** Consideration of the general principles of a Bill by a Parliament committee, after which these must be agreed by a majority of the whole Welsh Parliament.
- **Stage 2:** The Bill committee considers the legislation and any tabled amendments.
- **Stage 3:** The Welsh Parliament then considers the Bill and any amendments in plenary.
- **Stage 4:** A vote of the whole Parliament determines whether a final version of the Bill is to be passed or rejected.
- **Stage 5:** The Bill is given Royal Assent and becomes an Act of the Welsh Parliament. The word “Wales” is inserted to distinguish it from Westminster legislation.

Most Bills in the Welsh Parliament are introduced by the [Welsh Government](#), although legislation can also be initiated by committees, the Welsh Parliament Commission, individual Members of the Senate and public bodies or local authorities via private/hybrid Bills.³³

³¹ Welsh Parliament website, [Senedd Business-Committees](#)

³² See Commons Library Insight blog, [“Senedd Cymru: Why has the National Assembly for Wales changed its name?”](#), 6 May 2020.

³³ Russell Deacon *et al*, *The Government and Politics of Wales*, 2018, pp128-30.

16 Introduction to devolution in the UK

Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8318, "[*A process, not an event*](#)": [*Devolution in Wales, 1998-2020*](#), has comprehensive details of all aspects of the devolution settlement in Wales.

4. Devolution in Northern Ireland

4.1 Establishment

A campaign for some degree of [Home Rule for Ireland](#) grew during the 19th century and won Liberal government support in 1886. It took almost 30 years until the [Government of Ireland Act 1914](#) (which provided for the establishment of a bicameral parliament in Dublin) became law, although it was suspended for the duration of the First World War.

Following the [Easter Rising](#) of 1916, Irish public opinion hardened in favour of complete independence from the UK. Under the [Government of Ireland Act 1920](#) (which repealed the 1914 Act) the UK intended to create two devolved parliaments in Northern and Southern Ireland, but this was overtaken by the [war of independence](#) (1919-21).

The [Anglo-Irish Treaty](#) ended the war and partitioned Ireland between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, the latter remaining part of the UK under the 1920 Act.

The [Parliament of Northern Ireland](#), housed at Stormont from 1932, always had an [Ulster Unionist Party](#) majority and government. In 1948, Ireland (or Eire) declared itself a Republic, something recognised by the [Ireland Act 1949](#). This also declared that:

in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of His Majesty's dominions and of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.

The Troubles

A civil rights march in Derry/Londonderry in October 1968 marked the beginning of a period known as [The Troubles](#), a violent conflict regarding the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

By 1972, relations between the UK and Northern Ireland governments had broken down over the deteriorating security situation. The Northern Ireland Parliament was prorogued on 30 March 1972 and formally abolished in 1973 under the [Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973](#).

The [Northern Ireland Assembly Act 1973](#) restored devolved government and elections, boycotted by Republicans, were held on 28 June. The new Assembly³⁴ met for the first time on 31 July and following the [Sunningdale Agreement](#), a power-sharing Executive was established on 1 January 1974. It collapsed after only five months following a Loyalist general strike.

[Direct Rule](#) from Westminster was restored in July 1974, after which the [Northern Ireland Act 1974](#) provided that [Orders in Council](#) could be made for Northern Ireland in reserved and transferred powers, with only excepted matters enacted by primary legislation.

³⁴ As with the legislatures created in 1921 and 1998, the 1973 Assembly had three categories of powers: excepted, reserved and transferred.

Developments in the 1980s

The [Northern Ireland Act 1982](#) made provision for a new Northern Ireland Assembly to monitor the activities of the Northern Ireland Departments and make proposals for the resumption by the Assembly of its former functions under the two 1973 Acts. The Assembly was dissolved on 23 June 1986 by the [Northern Ireland Assembly \(Dissolution\) Order 1986](#), before any devolution of functions had taken place. Thereafter, the 1973 and 1982 Acts remained in force, which left open the possibility of a new Assembly being elected.³⁵

The [Anglo-Irish Agreement](#) of 1985, meanwhile, enhanced the Republic of Ireland's role in attempts to resolve The Troubles. This established the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, which was to be concerned with political, legal and security matters in Northern Ireland, as well as "the promotion of cross-border cooperation".

The peace process

On 15 December 1993, the [Downing Street Declaration](#) stated that the UK had no "selfish strategic or economic" interest in Northern Ireland. The following year, the [Irish Republican Army](#) (IRA) announced a "complete cessation of military activities", followed 43 days later by a similar announcement from the main Loyalist paramilitary groups.

On 22 February 1995, the UK Government published [Frameworks for the Future](#), which proposed new democratic institutions. A year later, the [Northern Ireland \(Entry to Negotiations, etc\) Act 1996](#) facilitated multi-party negotiations with the UK and Irish governments which began on 10 June, created an elected [Northern Ireland Forum](#), and made provision (under [Section 4](#)) for a future referendum.³⁶

The multi-party negotiations lasted for nearly two years and culminated with the [Belfast Agreement](#) (also known as the Good Friday Agreement) on 10 April 1998. This provided for a new Northern Ireland Assembly, Executive and consultative [Civic Forum](#) (Strand 1);³⁷ a North-South Ministerial Council (Strand 2); and a British-Irish Council (Strand 3); amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the [Constitution of Ireland](#), and a process for decommissioning weapons held by paramilitary groups and a programme for the accelerated release of paramilitary prisoners.

The Agreement was endorsed in a referendum on 22 May 1998. Most members of the UUP, the [Social Democratic and Labour Party](#) (SDLP) and Sinn Féin campaigned for a "yes" vote, while the [Democratic Unionist Party](#) (DUP) and Republican splinter groups campaigned for No. As in 1973, votes were counted on a Northern Ireland-wide basis.

71.1% voted Yes and 28.9% No. The turnout was 81%.³⁸

³⁵ See Cornelius O'Leary, Sydney Elliott and Rick Wilford, *The Northern Ireland Assembly, 1982-1986: A Constitutional Experiment*, London: C. Hurst, 1988.

³⁶ For a detailed account of the peace process see Commons Library Research Paper 96/52, [Northern Ireland Current political developments](#), 17 April 1996.

³⁷ The Civic Forum met for the first time in October 2000 but was suspended along with the Assembly in 2002. It has not met since.

³⁸ Commons Library Research Paper 99/30, [Referendums: Recent Developments](#), 16 March 1999, p49. A referendum in the Republic of Ireland also endorsed the Belfast

On 25 June 1998, elections were held to the [Northern Ireland Assembly](#) under the terms of the [Northern Ireland \(Elections\) Act 1998](#). It met for the first time on 1 July when David Trimble was elected First Minister (Designate) and the SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon Deputy First Minister (Designate). The then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, appointed Lord Alderdice as the “Initial” Presiding Officer.³⁹

Meanwhile, the *Northern Ireland Bill* was introduced to the House of Commons to give legal force to the Belfast Agreement by transferring legislative functions to the Assembly and executive functions to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, once negotiations were completed.

The Act also gave the Secretary of State the power to call for a referendum:

if at any time it appears likely to him that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form part of a united Ireland.⁴⁰

Subsequent developments

At the Assembly’s third meeting on 18 January 1999, it approved new departmental structures, which formed the basis of the present [Northern Ireland Departments](#).

US [Senator George Mitchell](#) presided over a review of the political process which concluded on 19 November 1999. This reached a compromise between the UUP and Sinn Féin positions on decommissioning, suggesting that all weapons should be put beyond use by 22 May 2000.

The Assembly met again on 29 November 1999. Ten Ministers, three each from the UUP and the SDLP and two each from the DUP and Sinn Féin, were nominated as were the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons for the ten Statutory Departmental Committees.⁴¹

On 30 November 1999, the Secretary of State made the [Northern Ireland Act 1998 \(Commencement Order No 5\)](#) which resulted in the formal devolution of powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly from 2 December 1999.⁴² The *Government of Ireland Act 1920* was [repealed](#) the same day.

Agreement with 94% voting Yes (on a 56% turnout), as well as related changes to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution.

³⁹ The Assembly’s [Standing Orders](#) provided for the Presiding Officer to be addressed as “Speaker”.

⁴⁰ Commons Library Research Paper 98/76, [The Northern Ireland Bill: Implementing the Belfast Agreement](#), 20 July 1998. See also Commons Library Research Paper 98/77, [The Northern Ireland Bill: Some Legislative and Operational Aspects of the Assembly](#), 17 July 1998.

⁴¹ With 92 out of 108 MLAs members of power-sharing parties, the role of Assembly “opposition” fell to smaller parties such as the [Alliance](#) and [Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition](#).

⁴² Northern Ireland Assembly website, [“History of the Assembly”](#).

4.2 Devolved powers in Northern Ireland

Under the devolution settlement in Northern Ireland, there are three categories of legislative powers: reserved, excepted and transferred. When fully functioning, the Northern Ireland Assembly can make primary and subordinate legislation on “transferred” matters; on “reserved” matters with the consent of the [Secretary of State for Northern Ireland](#) and, in limited circumstances, on “excepted” matters.

Excepted matters are subjects reserved to Westminster which will not be transferred unless under primary legislation. [Schedule 2](#) of the [Northern Ireland Act 1998](#) specifies these as:

- the constitution;
- Royal succession;
- international relations;
- defence and armed forces;
- nationality, immigration and asylum;
- elections;
- national security;
- nuclear energy;
- UK-wide taxation;
- Currency;
- conferring of honours;
- international treaties.

[Schedule 3](#) sets out “reserved matters”, subjects which could be transferred by [Orders in Council](#) to the Assembly provided there exists cross-community consent. These include:

- firearms and explosives;
- financial services and pensions regulation;
- broadcasting;
- import and export controls;
- navigation and civil aviation;
- international trade and financial markets;
- telecommunications and postage;
- the foreshore and seabed;
- disqualification from Assembly membership;
- consumer safety;
- intellectual property.

Anything not listed in Schedules 2 or 3 is considered “transferred” to the Assembly, including:

- health and social services;
- education, employment and skills;
- agriculture;
- social security, pensions and child support;
- housing;
- economic development;
- local government;
- environmental issues, including planning;
- transport;
- culture and sport;
- the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- equal opportunities;
- justice, prisons and policing.⁴³

This triple division of powers is unique to devolution in Northern Ireland and is derived from the former Parliament of Northern Ireland and aborted devolution schemes in the 1970s and 1980s.

Those previous devolution settlements also explain why welfare is fully devolved in Northern Ireland but not in Scotland and Wales. The Assembly, however, is constrained by the long-standing [parity principle](#), which requires Northern Ireland's social security and pensions systems to mirror those in the rest of the UK. This principle also applied under the original devolution settlement (1921-72) but was only put on a statutory footing under the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*.

The [Corporation Tax \(Northern Ireland\) Act 2015](#) provided for the Assembly to have the power to set [Corporation Tax](#) in respect of certain trading profits, although it has yet to be enacted.

4.3 Northern Ireland Assembly

Voters elect 90 [Members of the Legislative Assembly](#) (MLAs), five in each of Northern Ireland's 18 multi-member constituencies.⁴⁴ Elections are conducted under the [Single Transferable Vote](#) (STV) system of proportional representation. Elections are now held every five years but an "extraordinary" election can be held if the Assembly resolves to dissolve itself with the support of not less than two-thirds of MLAs, or if a First and Deputy First Minister fail to be nominated.

MLAs do not take an oath of allegiance to the Sovereign, as at Westminster and in the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, although they

⁴³ Policing and criminal justice were originally "reserved" matters but became "transferred" on 12 April 2010.

⁴⁴ Until (and including) the 2016 election, the Assembly initially consisted of 108 elected Members, six from each of Northern Ireland's 18 Westminster constituencies.

are required to give an undertaking against paramilitarism.⁴⁵ Ministers also have to take a [Pledge of Office](#). Members designate themselves “Nationalist”, “Unionist” or “other” at the first meeting of an Assembly following an election and can only change their community designation between elections if they have changed their party-political affiliation.⁴⁶

The Assembly is chaired by a [Speaker](#) and three deputy Speakers. At least ten members (including the Speaker) must be present for a vote to be taken on any matter. The Speaker is responsible for chairing debates in the Assembly, acting as its representative, chairing its [Business Committee](#), which agrees what business should be discussed in plenary sessions (unlike in the House of Commons, where the Government decides business), and the [Assembly Commission](#), which ensures the Assembly has the property, staff and services it needs to carry out its work. The staff of the Assembly is known collectively as the [Assembly Secretariat](#)

Most decisions of the Assembly are taken by a simple majority vote. However, certain “key decisions”, such as approval of a budget, must have cross-community support, either:

- **Parallel consent**, where more than 50% of MLAs agreed to the motion, including more than 50% of designated Nationalists and more than 50% of designated Unionists;
- **A weighted majority**, which requires the support of 60% of those voting, including 40% Unionist and 40% Nationalist support.⁴⁷

Another important aspect of Assembly voting is called a [Petition of Concern](#). If, in accordance with [s42\(1\)](#) of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*, 30 MLAs:

petition the Assembly expressing their concern about a matter which is to be voted on by the Assembly, the vote on that matter shall require cross-community support.

Measures agreed at St Andrews in 2006 also mean that 30 MLAs can petition the Assembly to refer a Ministerial decision back to the Executive for review.⁴⁸

The January 2020 [New Decade, New Approach](#) agreement included proposals to reform the Petition process.⁴⁹

The Assembly meets at the [Parliament Buildings](#) in Belfast, the former home of the Northern Ireland Parliament known as “Stormont”, which is also used as a metonym for the Northern Ireland Assembly.

⁴⁵ The Queen has not opened each new session of the Assembly, as in Scotland and Wales.

⁴⁶ Before 2006, MLAs could change their designation without a change of party membership, something several did so to facilitate David Trimble’s re-election as First Minister in November 2001.

⁴⁷ Colin Knox, *Devolution and the governance of Northern Ireland*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010, p19.

⁴⁸ Derek Birrell & Cathy Gormley-Heenan, *Multi-Level Governance and Northern Ireland*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p58.

⁴⁹ See Commons Library Insight blog, [“Northern Ireland Assembly: ‘New Decade, New Approach’”](#), 10 January 2020.

Executive Committee

The [Northern Ireland Executive Committee](#) (or simply Executive) comprises the First Minister, Deputy First Minister and eight (previously eleven) departmental ministers.

Together, these Ministers exercise executive authority on behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly, taking decisions on matters which individual Ministers are required to refer to it under the terms of the [Ministerial Code](#), including significant or controversial issues and matters which cut across the responsibility of two or more Ministers. The Executive Committee also agrees proposals put forward by Ministers for new legislation in the form of “Executive Bills”, draws up a programme for government and an agreed budget – all for approval by the Assembly.

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, as joint chairs of the Executive, are required to seek consensus on all issues. If this is not possible a vote may be taken, and if three Ministers request it, that vote must be taken on a cross-community basis.⁵⁰

Executive Ministers are nominated by the political parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The number nominated by each party is determined under the [d’Hondt formula](#) by its share of seats in the Assembly.⁵¹ The only exception is the Minister for Justice, which after the devolution of policing and justice in 2010 has been appointed following a cross-community vote in the Assembly.⁵²

An unusual feature of the devolution settlement in Northern Ireland is that statutory powers are vested in individually constituted Executive Departments led by their own permanent secretary (something that was also true under the previous Northern Ireland Parliament). Each Minister thus has executive authority effectively independent of the others but must operate within the terms of the Ministerial Code when it comes to their obligations to the Executive Committee.

This means that judicial review is usually directed at individual departments rather than “Northern Ireland Ministers” collectively, as in Scotland and Wales.

Initially, the First and Deputy First Minister (who jointly head the [Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister](#)) were elected by the Assembly, but under the 2006 [St Andrews Agreement](#) and subsequent legislation, they are now nominated, respectively, by the largest party within the largest political designation and the largest party within the second-largest political designation. If one resigns, the other automatically ceases to hold office and both vacant offices must be filled within a period of seven days. This form of power-sharing government is often known as [consociationalism](#).⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The d’Hondt method is also used to determine membership of the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

⁵² The first Minister for Justice was Alliance MLA David Ford, who was succeeded by Independent MLA Claire Sugden in May 2016.

⁵³ See Arend Lijphart, [“The Northern Ireland Problem: Cases, Theories and Solutions”](#), *British Journal of Political Science* 5:1, pp83-106.

Assembly Committees

Most MLAs are members of [Assembly Committees](#), which mirror and scrutinise the work of individual Northern Ireland Departments, policy, new laws and wider topics in detail.

The role of the Statutory Committees is to advise and assist each Northern Ireland Minister in the development of policy within their departmental remits. There are also Standing Committees which deal with Assembly administration (i.e. the Business Committee).

The Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of the Committees are selected by the nominating officers of the main political parties depending on their party strengths. Committee membership is also filled based on party strength in accordance with [Standing Order 47](#). Committees of the Assembly take decisions by a simple majority vote.

4.4 How laws are made in the Assembly

Most Bills are introduced by an Executive Minister, but a Bill can also be introduced by an Assembly Committee or by an individual MLA. It then has to pass several stages before becoming an Act:

- **First Stage:** The Speaker introduces the Bill to the Assembly. The Clerk of the Assembly reads out the Bill's title and the Speaker orders the Bill to be printed. There is no debate or vote;
- **Second Stage:** The Assembly debates the general principles of the Bill and then votes on whether to consider the legislative proposal further;
- **Committee Stage:** An Assembly Committee considers the clause by clause and line by line, discussing what amendments to make and produces a report on the Bill;
- **Consideration Stage:** MLAs debate the Committee's report, including proposed amendments, in the Assembly Chamber. Individual MLAs can also suggest amendments at this stage;
- **Further Consideration Stage:** This stage provides a further opportunity to amend the Bill. New proposals for amendments are debated and voted on in the Chamber;
- **Final Stage:** A final debate on the Bill takes place, although MLAs cannot make amendments at this stage. Members vote on whether or not to pass the Bill.

Following the first reading of a Bill, the Speaker sends a copy to the [Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission](#), and on the completion of all the Stages of a Bill sends it to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland requesting Royal Assent. If this is granted, the Speaker makes an announcement at the next plenary sitting of the Assembly. The enacted law may come into effect immediately, or at a future date.

Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8439, [Devolution in Northern Ireland 1998-2020](#), has more details on every aspect of the devolution settlement in Northern Ireland.

5. Devolution in England

Devolution in England has progressed at a much slower pace than in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Only Greater London was included in the reforms of the late 1990s, while, more recently, the focus has been on devolving power to clusters of local authorities, for example in Manchester and Liverpool, together with the election of “metro mayors”. This has been executive devolution rather than legislative.

5.1 Historical background

In 1912, Winston Churchill, then a Liberal MP for Dundee, made a [speech advocating a federal United Kingdom](#) of 10 or 12 legislatures including seven English regions. As with similar proposals for “Home Rule” or devolution in Scotland and Wales, such schemes were often a response to the Irish Question.⁵⁴

Other proposals considered devolution on an England-wide scale rather than at the regional level. The 1919-20 [Speaker’s Conference on Devolution](#) recommended bicameral “Grand Councils” for England, Scotland and Wales constituted from existing parliamentarians, while a minority report instead urged directly-elected legislatures.⁵⁵

Pressure for (regional or national) English devolution, however, was not as salient as that in Scotland and Wales. The 1973 [Royal Commission on the Constitution](#) considered but did not recommend the creation of an English assembly,⁵⁶ while in 1976 the then Labour Government published a consultative document on the “English Dimension”, which included the prospect of “elected regional assemblies with the ability to exercise functions in specified fields”.⁵⁷

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Labour Party continued to explore options for devolution within England. Its 1992 manifesto promised a “regional tier of government in the English regions” with responsibility for economic planning and transport, which might later form “the basis for elected regional governments”.⁵⁸ The 1997 manifesto, however, promised to create [Regional Development Agencies](#) (RDAs) to co-ordinate economic development and, in time, introduce legislation:

to allow the people, region by region, to decide in a referendum whether they want directly elected regional government. Only

⁵⁴ See J. E. Kendle, [“The Round Table Movement and ‘Home Rule All Round’”](#), *The Historical Journal* 11:2, 1968, pp332-53.

⁵⁵ See Adam Evans, [“Four nations and a constitution: the Conference on Devolution, 1919-1920”](#), [fournationshistory.wordpress.com](#), 2014.

⁵⁶ Lord Kilbrandon, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Constitution*, Cmnd. 5460, London: HMSO, 1973, p65. As with the earlier Speaker’s Conference, [a minority report advocated directly-elected assemblies across the UK](#), including five for England.

⁵⁷ Lord President of the Council, *Devolution: The English Dimension*, HMSO, 1976, p13.

⁵⁸ Labour Party, [It’s time to get Britain working again](#), 1992.

where popular consent is established will arrangements be made for elected regional assemblies.⁵⁹

5.2 English devolution since 1997

Regional Development Agencies and “Regional Chambers” were established by the Labour Government in 1999. Mark Sandford has argued that these organisations amounted to a “form of regionalism, if not by stealth, then certainly by default”.⁶⁰

In 2003, the Government announced that referendums would (initially) occur in three English regions: The North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West – areas in which consultations indicated the most support for regional government.

Each were planned to take place on 4 November 2004, but due to concerns about the use of postal ballots, only that in the North East took place. The result, on an all-postal ballot, was an almost four-to-one vote against a directly-elected assembly.⁶¹ As the academic James Mitchell has observed, this “overwhelming rejection killed the idea [of regional devolution] dead”.⁶²

5.3 Greater London Authority and Mayor

In opposition, the Labour Party had also considered reforms in London. In 1996 it published *A Voice for London*, a consultative document which proposed a directly-elected executive Mayor of London and a small, scrutiny-oriented Assembly. This became a manifesto commitment at the 1997 election:

London is the only Western capital without an elected city government. Following a referendum to confirm popular demand, there will be a new deal for London, with a strategic authority and a mayor, each directly elected. Both will speak up for the needs of the city and plan its future.⁶³

This proposal became a Green Paper, *New Leadership for London*, in July 1997 and was to be subject to a referendum, the subject of separate legislation via the [Greater London Authority \(Referendum\) Act 1998](#).⁶⁴ This took place on 7 May 1998, resulting in a large “yes” vote on a turnout of 34%.⁶⁵

Following passage of the [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), the first elections were held on 4 May 2000. Standing as an independent, Ken

⁵⁹ Labour Party, [New Labour: Because Britain deserves better](#), 1997.

⁶⁰ Mark Sandford, “Facts on the Ground: the Growth of Institutional Answers to the English Question in the Regions”, in Robert Hazell (ed.), *The English Question*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006, p175.

⁶¹ See BBC News online, [“North East votes ‘no’ to assembly”](#), 5 November 2004.

⁶² James Mitchell, *Devolution in the UK*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009, p210.

⁶³ Labour Party, [New Labour: Because Britain deserves better](#), 1997.

⁶⁴ The full proposals were confirmed in a March 1998 White Paper entitled *A Mayor and Assembly for London*.

⁶⁵ See Commons Library Briefing Paper 05817, [The Greater London Authority](#), 7 June 2018.

Livingstone was elected Mayor,⁶⁶ while four political parties achieved representation in the 25-member Assembly.⁶⁷

The GLA's responsibilities

Together, the Mayor and [Assembly](#) constitute the Greater London Authority (GLA). Although it is often described as an example of 'devolution', inviting comparison with the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly, its powers are very limited compared to those bodies.

The [Mayor of London's website](#) says s/he has "a duty to create plans and policies for the capital" dealing with:

- Arts & Culture;
- Business & Economy;
- Environment;
- Fire (via the [London Fire Commissioner](#), over which the GLA has executive power);
- Health;
- Housing and Land (the Mayor publishes a [London Housing Strategy](#));
- Planning (the Mayor is required to produce a Spatial Development Strategy known as the [London Plan](#));⁶⁸
- Policing & Crime (via the [Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime](#));⁶⁹
- Regeneration;⁷⁰
- Sport;
- Transport (via [Transport for London](#), over which the GLA has executive authority);
- Young People.

The Mayor of London holds all of the executive power in the GLA, but certain key actions can be prevented by the London Assembly. The Assembly may amend the Mayor's annual budget, or a Mayoral strategy, on a two-thirds majority. Other than this, it has no sanctions with which to prevent the Mayor taking a particular action.⁷¹

The functions of the Mayor differ across policy areas. For bodies such as Transport for London, the Mayor appoints members to their boards and

⁶⁶ Livingstone had been leader of the former Greater London Council between 1981-86.

⁶⁷ Commons Library Briefing Paper 05817, [The Greater London Authority](#), 7 June 2018.

⁶⁸ The next version of the Plan is expected to be published in late 2019. The Mayor also has powers to intervene in applications of "potential strategic importance" submitted to London boroughs.

⁶⁹ The Mayor of London is ex officio Police and Crime Commissioner for London.

⁷⁰ The London Development Agency was abolished in 2011, with some of its residual powers absorbed by the GLA.

⁷¹ No such rejection has ever taken place. So far, only the 2004 mayoralty has seen less than one-third of Assembly members come from the Mayor's own party. During that period, the significance of the power to reject the budget lay in its threat rather than its use. The power to reject strategies was introduced in the [Localism Act 2011](#).

sets their budgets and strategy: in practice, he has full authority, although the majority of their funding comes direct from the Treasury and cannot be moved to another budget area.⁷² Other matters, such as strategic housing funding and European funding (to be replaced by the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#)), are handled “in-house” by the GLA, where the Mayor again has full authority.

In a number of additional fields, the Mayor is under a statutory duty to produce strategy documents, intended to serve as a policy direction for the public (and private and voluntary) sectors, but without the wherewithal to deliver the strategy.

The GLA has a general power of competence, which may be used to promote economic and social development and environmental improvements within London.⁷³ Through this power, previous mayors have set up and resourced a number of initiatives. Generally the Mayor is expected to extend his/her influence beyond the executive functions of the GLA and to use their democratic mandate to “knock heads together”, providing leadership to a wide range of actors across London.

There is a supporting [Mayoral team](#), which in law are “political advisers”, of which the Mayor is allowed to appoint ten. Under previous Mayors these appointments have been described as “deputy mayors”, or as the “Mayoral cabinet”. Formally there is only one statutory “deputy mayor”, who must be a member of the London Assembly.

Mayoral accountability

Under the 1999 Act, the Mayor must hold two public [People’s Question Time](#) events per year; and [Questions to the Mayor](#), in front of the London Assembly, take place ten times per year.

The Assembly also has the power to hold the Mayor and his/her key advisers to account on a regular basis. It organises itself into subject-based scrutiny committees, taking evidence and publishing reports. It also has a budget, audit and standards committee (each covering the whole GLA family),⁷⁴ and a [Confirmation Hearings Committee](#). The latter is entitled to hold confirmation hearings for a range of key Mayoral appointments, though it has no power to veto them.

Changes to powers and functions

Since 2005, reviews of and extensions to the GLA’s powers have been initiated by successive UK Governments via, for example, the [Greater London Authority Act 2007](#), the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#), the [Public Bodies Act 2011](#) and the [Localism Act 2011](#).

In July 2012, the then Mayor Boris Johnson established the [London Finance Commission](#) to examine potential additional sources of revenue for the GLA. It produced a report, [Raising the capital](#), in May 2013 which proposed that all property taxation within London should be fully devolved to the GLA.

⁷² *Greater London Authority Act 1999*, s31.

⁷³ *Greater London Authority Act 1999*, s30 (2).

⁷⁴ See London Assembly website for a [full list of committees](#).

In July 2016 the Mayor, Sadiq Khan, reconvened the London Finance Commission in the wake of the June 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Its final report, [Devolution: a capital idea](#), was published in January 2017. The report recommends the devolution of several taxes to London government, such as stamp duty, Air Passenger Duty and Vehicle Excise Duty, together with a share of income tax and VAT revenue. A tourism tax was also proposed.

None of these proposals have yet been acted upon by the UK Government.

Sources of revenue

The GLA has several sources of revenue: Council Tax precepts; transport levies (congestion charge and emissions levy, and, from September 2019, the [Ultra Low Emission Zone](#) levy); fare revenue from transport; borrowing powers; the [Business Rates Retention Scheme](#); a [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) (introduced in 1 April 2012) payable on new developments in London, and a supplementary business rate of 2p in the pound on all businesses in Greater London with a rateable value over £55,000 (to fund [Crossrail](#)).

How the GLA is elected

The Mayor of London and the 25-member London Assembly are elected on a four-yearly cycle, with elections on the first Thursday of May.

The Mayor is elected by the Supplementary Vote system. Voting consists of two crosses: one in a column for the voter's first choice candidate, and one in a column for the second-choice candidate. The first choices are counted, and the top two candidates go through to a run-off. The first-choice votes for other candidates are then examined, and where those voters have voted for one of the top two as their second choice, their vote is reallocated. The candidate with the largest number of votes following this process is the winner.⁷⁵

The London Assembly is elected by the Additional Member system. There are 14 single-member constituencies and 11 additional member or "top-up" seats for the whole of Greater London. Voters have one vote for the constituency member and one vote for the top-up seats. The latter are allocated on the basis of the top-up votes cast, but this takes into account constituency seats won by the relevant party: hence overall party strength in the Assembly is proportional to the top-up votes cast. In the London Assembly, parties must also win at least 5% of the top-up vote to be entitled to a seat.⁷⁶

The most recent elections took place on 5 May 2016, when Sadiq Khan (Labour) emerged the winner with 56.8% over Zac Goldsmith's (Conservative) 43.2%. In the London Assembly, Labour won 12 seats, one short of a majority. The Conservatives took 8 seats, the Green Party two, UKIP two and the Liberal Democrats one.⁷⁷ The election due in

⁷⁵ This system is also used for local authority mayoral elections and [Police and Crime Commissioners](#).

⁷⁶ This system is also used for the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

⁷⁷ See BBC News online, [London Elections 2016](#).

May 2020 have been [postponed for a year due to the coronavirus pandemic](#).

5.4 Devolution deals in England

Following the “no” vote in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that, as well as devolving further powers to the Scottish Parliament, he also considered it important to:

have wider civic engagement about how to improve governance in our United Kingdom, including how to empower our great cities.⁷⁸

The [Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009](#) already allowed the creation of appointed “Combined Authorities” covering multiple local authority areas, for example the Greater Manchester Combined Authority established in 2011. The [Localism Act 2011](#), meanwhile, granted Combined Authorities a general power of competence.

Following the 2015 general election, the Conservative Government said it was:

committed to building strong city regions led by elected mayors, building on the ground-breaking devolution deal with Greater Manchester in November 2014. The Chancellor has asked all relevant Secretaries of State to proactively consider what they can devolve to local areas.⁷⁹

By a deadline of 4 September 2015, the Government received 38 bids from potential Combined Authorities for devolved powers, although some of these were intended to begin a discussion rather than representing a final position. The [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016](#) also allowed for directly-elected mayors in these areas.

After 2016, the pace of the devolution agenda slowed, with the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto pledging continued support for elected mayors in cities but not rural counties.⁸⁰

As of June 2019, there are ten functioning devolution deals,⁸¹ all but one of which (Cornwall) involve Combined Authorities:

- [Greater Manchester](#) (latest deal agreed on 16 March 2016)
- [Sheffield City Region](#) (5 October 2015)
- [West Yorkshire](#) (18 March 2015; elected mayor proposed in May 2021)⁸²

⁷⁸ See BBC News online, [“In full: David Cameron’s statement on the UK’s future”](#), 19 September 2014.

⁷⁹ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2015: A country that lives within its means](#), 2015, p15.

⁸⁰ Conservative Party, [Forward Together](#), 2017, p32.

⁸¹ There were two other agreed devolution deals in Greater Lincolnshire and Norfolk/Suffolk, but these later collapsed.

⁸² A [West Yorkshire Devolution Deal](#) was agreed on 13 March 2020 which included a directly-elected mayor. See Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-7029, [Devolution to local government in England](#), p24.

- [Cornwall](#) (27 July 2015; no elected mayor)
- [North of Tyne](#) (24 November 2017)
- [Tees Valley](#) (23 October 2015)
- [West Midlands](#) (23 November 2017)
- [Liverpool City Region](#) (16 March 2016)
- [Cambridgeshire/Peterborough](#) (20 June 2016)
- [West of England](#) (16 March 2016)

All deals were negotiated privately between the UK Government and local authority leaders.⁸³ They were implemented via Orders passing through Parliament, under the [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016](#). Some elements of the devolution deals do not concern statutory functions, and therefore do not require Orders. The deal documents themselves are not statutory.

Six Combined Authorities held mayoral elections in May 2017, one in 2018 and another in 2019. Detailed results can be found in the Library briefing papers [Local election results 2017](#), [Local election results 2018](#) and [Local election results 2019](#). Elections due in May 2020 (Greater Manchester, Tees Valley, Liverpool City Region and West Midlands) have been postponed until 2021, when they will take place alongside those for the West of England, Cambridgeshire/Peterborough, West Yorkshire and the Greater London Authority.

The Government published the first “devolution report” required under the 2016 Act on 2 December 2016 (covering 2015-16),⁸⁴ the second in January 2018 (2016-17),⁸⁵ and the third in March 2019 (2017-18).⁸⁶ The reports set out deals agreed, Orders passed and funding provided during the financial year in question.

In November 2017, Sajid Javid, the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced work on a devolution “framework”, with a “clear position on how [future] devolution negotiations should proceed”.⁸⁷

The [2019 Conservative Party manifesto](#) pledged an English devolution white paper during 2020, with an aim of “full devolution across England”.

Commons Library Briefing Paper 07029, [Devolution to local government in England](#), also includes details of unsuccessful Combined Authority negotiations.⁸⁸

⁸³ A series of [“Devolution and mayors: what does it mean?”](#) guides to each devolution deal are available at the MHCLG website.

⁸⁴ See DCLG, [Secretary of State’s annual report on devolution 2015 to 2016](#), 2 December 2016.

⁸⁵ See DCLG, [Secretary of State’s annual report on devolution 2016 to 2017](#), 10 January 2018.

⁸⁶ MHCLG, [Secretary of State’s annual report on devolution 2017-18](#), 10 March 2019.

⁸⁷ Nick Golding, [“Javid: Devo framework to provide ‘clarity and consistency’”](#), *Local Government Chronicle*, 21 November 2017.

⁸⁸ See pp6 & 8.

Combined Authority powers

A number of core powers were made available to most Combined Authorities. These are:

- **Further education:** Local commissioning of the [adult education budget](#) took place from 2016-17, to be followed by full devolution of the budget planned from 2019-20;⁸⁹
- **Business support:** In most areas, local and central business support services are or will be united in a “growth hub”;
- **The Work Programme:** Devolved areas will participate in the commissioning of the [Work Programme](#);⁹⁰
- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund:** A number of areas are to become “intermediate bodies”, which means that they, instead of the UK Government, will take decisions about which public and private bodies to grant this proposed replacement for EU structural funds to once the transition period ends;⁹¹
- **Fiscal powers:** Most devolution deals include an investment fund; some areas are piloting full retention of business rates from 2017-18 onwards (London, Manchester, Cornwall, Liverpool and the West Midlands). Elected mayors will have the power to add a supplement of up to 2% on business rates;⁹²
- **Integrated transport systems:** Many deals include the power to introduce bus franchising, which would allow local areas to determine their bus route networks and to let franchises to private bus companies for operating services on those networks;⁹³
- **Planning and land use:** Many deals include the power to create a spatial plan for the Combined Authority area, and/or the power to establish Mayoral Development Corporations.

Some Combined Authorities, for example Greater Manchester, West Midlands and the West of England, also have some powers over housing, while Greater Manchester, Cornwall (although not a Combined Authority) and Greater London have a degree of responsibility for health policy.

Combined Authority Mayors

In most areas, elected mayors have an effective veto over decisions made by their respective Combined Authorities. Mayoral spending plans are, in most cases, to be subject to rejection by cabinet members on a two-thirds majority.

⁸⁹ See the Commons Library debate pack [Skills devolution in England](#), 19 January 2018, for further details.

⁹⁰ This was superseded in July 2017 by a new £28 million grant for devolved areas (except Greater Manchester and Greater London, which have their own arrangements) to develop a programme for ‘harder-to-help’ benefit claimants.

⁹¹ See [Budget 2020](#), p49, which states that: “At a minimum, [the UK Shared Prosperity Fund] will match current levels of funding for each nation from EU structural funds.”

⁹² This power is on hold due to the falling of the *Local Government Finance Bill* in 2017.

⁹³ See the Library briefing paper on the [Bus Services Act 2017](#) for further details.

Further devolution to (or within) England?

Since 1998 the [Campaign for an English Parliament](#) has argued for a directly-elected all-England legislature with powers:

at least as great as those of Scotland's, i.e. a Parliament and Executive (Government) that can make Acts (primary legislation) on the same domestic issues (e.g. health, welfare & education) that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.⁹⁴

In a 2019 report, the [Constitution Unit](#) examined the [Options for an English Parliament](#).

There are also active devolution campaigns in certain parts of England such as [Yorkshire](#) and [Cornwall](#). Others argue that elected regional English assemblies should form part of a reconstituted federal UK.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Campaign for an English Parliament website, '[Aims, Principles and Policies](#)'.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Andrew Blick, [Federalism: The UK's Future?](#) The Federal Trust, April 2016.

6. Intergovernmental relations

Most of the present machinery for intergovernmental relations (IGR) in the UK dates from the creation of devolved legislatures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the late 1990s.⁹⁶ It does not at present include London or any of the Combined Authorities in England.

6.1 Memorandum of Understanding

A non-binding [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) first published in October 1999 set out the “four Cs” that ought to underpin relations between the [UK Government](#) and [Northern Ireland Executive](#), Scottish Executive (later [Scottish Government](#)) and Welsh Assembly Government (later [Welsh Government](#)):

- good **communication** between governments (especially where responsibilities or interests overlap);
- timely and **confidential** exchange of information (where relevant and appropriate);
- **cooperation** in areas of mutual interest; and
- **consultation**: sharing of statistics and research where appropriate.⁹⁷

Since 2009, the MOU has been reviewed and amended regularly, the most recent edition dating from October 2013.⁹⁸ On 14 March 2018, the Prime Minister and First Ministers of Scotland and Wales committed to:

review and report to Ministers on the existing intergovernmental structures, including the Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure they are fit for purpose in light of the UK’s exit from the EU.⁹⁹

On 3 July 2019, the UK’s four administrations agreed [Draft principles for intergovernmental relations](#) as part of this ongoing review.

In order to supplement the MOU and associated concordats, from September 1999 the Cabinet Office also began to issue [Devolution Guidance Notes](#) (DGN) for civil servants, setting out advice on working arrangements between the UK Government and the devolved administrations.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ See Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-8371, [Intergovernmental relations in the United Kingdom](#), 24 July 2018 for comprehensive details of IGR in the UK.

⁹⁷ Cmnd 5240, [Devolution: Memorandum of Understanding and Supplementary Agreements](#), December 2001, pp6-8. This was the third MOU; the original was published in October 1999 (Cmnd 4444) and replaced with a revised version in July 2000 (Cmnd 4806).

⁹⁸ Cabinet Office, [Devolution: Memorandum of Understanding and Supplementary Agreements](#), October 2013.

⁹⁹ No 10 Downing Street, [“Joint Ministerial Committee \(Plenary\)”](#), 14 March 2018.

¹⁰⁰ See UK Government, [Guidance on Devolution](#), most recently updated on 9 May 2019.

6.2 Joint Ministerial Council

The MOU established a core quadrilateral forum called the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), comprising ministers from the UK and devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

According to the MOU, the JMC's remit is:

- to consider non-devolved matters which impinge on devolved responsibilities, and devolved matters which impinge on non-devolved responsibilities;
- to consider devolved matters, where the UK Government and the devolved administrations so agree, if it is beneficial to discuss their respective treatment in the different parts of the United Kingdom;
- to keep the arrangements for liaison between the UK Government; and the devolved administrations under review; and
- to consider disputes between the administrations.¹⁰¹

Officials in the JMC secretariat work from their respective capitals, with the UK Cabinet Office expected to take the lead in co-ordination of JMC meetings and associated logistics.

Existing structure of the JMC

The main Joint Ministerial Committee forum is known as JMC (Plenary), which normally consists of the four administrations' heads of government and the three territorial Secretaries of State.¹⁰² This is expected to meet at least once a year and is routinely hosted by the UK Government in London. Following each meeting a communiqué is published on all four governments' websites.

There are also two standing sub-committees of the JMC:

- JMC (Europe)
- JMC (Domestic)

These typically meet more frequently than JMC (Plenary). In February 2018, the Institute for Government compiled a [timeline of JMC plenary and committee meetings](#). Between 1999-2003, additional *ad hoc* JMC committees were set up to deliver on specific objectives. These were:

- JMC (Poverty)
- JMC (Knowledge Economy)
- JMC (Health)

More recently, another committee, JMC (European Negotiations), was established to handle intergovernmental relations in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the UK and its impact on the devolution settlements. There are also meetings of what is known as the Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral (FMQ) and the Agriculture Quadrilateral.

¹⁰¹ [Devolution: Memorandum of Understanding and Supplementary Agreements](#)

¹⁰² The Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, given his or her "equal" status with the First Minister, also attends, or a senior official from the Northern Ireland Civil Service if the Assembly and Executive are not fully functioning.

The JMC and dispute resolution

The JMC was originally envisaged as a last resort for resolving disputes between the four governments, although the MOU made clear resolution ought in the first instance be attempted on a bilateral basis.

Until 2007, the JMC did not operate in its conflict resolution capacity. Disputes over tuition fees, free personal care for the elderly and Hepatitis C compensation (between Scotland and the UK) and Objective One EU funding (between Wales and the UK) were resolved via informal bilateral meetings.¹⁰³

In 2010, the JMC Dispute Resolution Protocol set out an agreed process for avoiding and resolving disputes. It states that “all efforts should be made to resolve differences informally and at the working level”, but if that proves impossible then the “difference” becomes a “disagreement” that any of the parties can refer to the JMC secretariat.

In that event, a meeting of officials from the relevant administrations are convened to propose a solution, and if the disagreement cannot be resolved through official channels, it is then referred to the JMC as a “dispute”, after which a senior UK Minister chairs a meeting of ministers from relevant UK departments and devolved governments.

To date, this process has only been invoked four times, three of the disputes relating to the devolved governments’ funding (via the [Barnett formula](#)), and the fourth concerning fishing quotas. In 2017, the Welsh and Scottish Governments also sought to open a dispute about the Conservative Party’s [confidence-and-supply deal](#) with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).¹⁰⁴

6.3 Financial disputes

The three devolved administrations are funded by a combination of a “block grant” from Westminster, changes to which are governed by the non-statutory [Barnett formula](#), and locally-raised revenue via taxation. The Northern Ireland Assembly has fewer powers in this respect than the Scottish or Welsh Parliaments, controlling only the “regional rate” for domestic and non-domestic property.¹⁰⁵

The UK Government’s [Statement of funding policy](#) sets out the procedure if there is a disagreement between UK Treasury ministers and the devolved administrations about “any aspect of its application for determining funding”:

[...] the relevant devolved administration can pursue the matter with Treasury ministers. [...] The Treasury will consider and respond to any such representation in taking this forward with the relevant party. This is also in line with the process outlined in the agreement on dispute avoidance and resolution in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK government

¹⁰³ Alan Trench, *Devolution and Power in the United Kingdom*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, p164.

¹⁰⁴ Institute for Government, [Governing in an Ever Looser Union](#), 2015, pp66-67.

¹⁰⁵ See HM Treasury, [Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly: Statement of Funding Policy](#), October 2010.

and devolved administrations [...] under which matters can also be raised through the Joint Ministerial Committee.¹⁰⁶

Failing any bilateral resolution, financial disputes can then be referred to the UK Cabinet, although there they could only be voiced by the relevant territorial Secretary of State, not the devolved administration itself.¹⁰⁷

Greater fiscal and welfare powers

As additional fiscal and welfare powers were devolved to Scotland and Wales in the 2010s, there arose the need for new bilateral IGR arrangements.

Meetings of the UK-Scotland [Joint Exchequer Committee](#) (JEC) are attended by Treasury Ministers, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Scottish Government's Finance Secretary. Implementation of the [Scottish Rate of Income Tax](#) (SRIT) is overseen by a Joint Programme Board. An Intergovernmental Assurance Board also oversees the planning and implementation of financial provisions, jointly chaired by the Treasury and the Scottish Government.¹⁰⁸

A similar UK-Wales JEC was created shortly before the [Wales Act 2014](#) received royal assent which, like the [Scotland Act 2012](#), granted tax-varying powers to the then National Assembly for Wales. This is attended by Treasury Ministers, the Secretary of State for Wales and the Welsh Government Minister for Finance and Government Business.

Building on the success of this JEC model, the UK Government then established another joint working group on welfare as "a forum in which UK Ministers and Scottish Ministers can discuss the operation of the new arrangements" both in advance of, and following, the [Scotland Act 2016](#), which gave Holyrood greater control over welfare.¹⁰⁹

6.4 United Kingdom Supreme Court

If the Joint Ministerial Committee handles disputes of a political (and financial) nature, then the courts and, ultimately, the [United Kingdom Supreme Court](#) (UKSC) deals with legal disputes involving "devolution issues" – i.e. challenges to the action of a devolved institution for acting ultra vires, or beyond its legal competence.

Although not a constitutional court per se,¹¹⁰ the UKSC's website says it "concentrates on cases of the greatest public and constitutional importance", a reference to its role in hearing and determining questions:

¹⁰⁶ HM Treasury, [Statement of funding policy: funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly](#), November 2015, p39.

¹⁰⁷ HM Government, [Protocol for Avoidance and Resolution of Disputes](#), 2010.

¹⁰⁸ HM Government, [Scotland in the United Kingdom: An enduring settlement](#), January 2015, p36.

¹⁰⁹ See Scottish Government Press Release, ["Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare"](#), 16 June 2016.

¹¹⁰ Lady Hale, President of the Supreme Court, has argued that the devolution of legislative rather than executive power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has turned the UKSC "into a genuinely constitutional court" (Lady Hale, ["Devolution and the Supreme Court – 20 Years On"](#), 14 June 2018).

relating to the powers and functions of the legislative and executive authorities established in Scotland and Northern Ireland by the Scotland Act 1998 and the Northern Ireland Act 1998 respectively, and questions as to the competence and functions of those established by the Government of Wales Act 2006, whether or not the issue arises in proceedings in England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.¹¹¹

Prior to the establishment of the UKSC under the [Constitutional Reform Act 2005](#) (which began work on 1 October 2009), devolution issues had been considered by the [Judicial Committee of the Privy Council](#).

Although these had been limited in the case of the Scottish Parliament – between 1999–2004 only one Act was challenged on the basis that it was considered to have infringed the European Convention on Human Rights – referrals from the then National Assembly for Wales were more common.¹¹²

More recently, an intergovernmental dispute as to whether the Scottish Government's *EU Continuity Bill* was within the Scottish Parliament's legislative competence was referred by the UK Government, a matter heard by the UKSC on 24–25 July 2018.¹¹³

There are broadly three routes by which devolution cases can reach the Supreme Court:

- **first**, through a reference of a Bill that is before a devolved legislature by UK or Scottish Government law officers;
- **second**, via a statutory reference or appeal of a “devolution issue”, as defined in each of the devolution statutes;
- **third**, through the normal judicial process, with cases arriving at the Supreme Court on appeal from lower courts.¹¹⁴

6.5 Intergovernmental relations and Ireland

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) created (or revived) several statutory intergovernmental forums involving the UK, Irish and Northern Irish governments, as well as those (in one case) of the [Crown Dependencies](#) and the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales.

North-South Ministerial Council

Strand Two of the GFA provided that at least 12 subject areas would be identified for co-operation and implementation for mutual benefit under the aegis of the [North South Ministerial Council](#) (NSMC).

British-Irish Council

The GFA also established the [British-Irish Council](#) (BIC) as an east-west counterpart to the NSMC, with a secretariat based (since 2012) in Edinburgh. According to the BIC's website, its purpose is:

¹¹¹ Supreme Court website, [“Role of the Supreme Court”](#) [accessed 20 July 2018].

¹¹² See Commons Library Briefing Paper 07670, [The Supreme Court on Devolution](#), 27 July 2016.

¹¹³ Supreme Court website, [“Case details”](#) [accessed 21 July 2018].

¹¹⁴ Commons Library Briefing Paper 07670, [The Supreme Court on Devolution](#), 27 July 2016.

to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands [...] the BIC will exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant administrations.¹¹⁵

It consists of representatives from the:

- UK Government;
- [Irish Government](#);
- Northern Ireland Executive;
- Scottish Government;
- Welsh Government;
- [Isle of Man Government](#);
- [States of Guernsey](#); and
- [States of Jersey](#).

The BIC usually meets twice a year at ministerial summits, and via “work sector” meetings, which include ministers and officials from specific policy areas. Work sectors cover energy, early-years policy, transport and misuse of drugs, all areas where there are common challenges across all member administrations.

British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

A third body established under the Good Friday Agreement was the [British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference](#) (BIIC), which subsumed the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and Intergovernmental Conference established under the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The BIIC grants the Irish Government a say in areas of bilateral co-operation and on non-devolved matters and, like the NSMC and BIC, has a joint secretariat comprising officials from the UK and Irish Governments and based in Belfast. Meetings are normally chaired by the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, although provision is made for “summit” meetings between the UK Prime Minister and Taoiseach (as in 1999 and 2005).

6.6 Westminster and devolution

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, who is simultaneously Minister for the Cabinet Office, has responsibility for “overseeing constitutional affairs and maintaining the integrity of the Union”.¹¹⁶ Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister, is also [Minister for the Union](#).

Much day-to-day IGR is carried out on a bilateral basis between officials in Whitehall and those working in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. As the Memorandum of Understanding makes clear that the principal:

¹¹⁵ British-Irish Council website, [“About the Council”](#) [accessed 21 July 2018].

¹¹⁶ HM Government website, [“The Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP”](#) [accessed 21 July 2018].

channel of communication between administrations should be through bilateral links between the relevant departments of each administration, at official or ministerial level.¹¹⁷

There is a [Cabinet Office](#) team responsible for co-ordinating meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee in partnership with officials from the devolved administrations and relevant UK Government departments. It forms part of the [UK Governance Group](#) (UKGG), which was established in June 2015 to lead the UK Government's work on constitutional and devolution issues.¹¹⁸

Within the UKGG is a group of civil servants who comprise the "Constitution Group", which "maintains an overview of the position of the devolved administrations within the constitution and works to sustain good relations between the devolved administrations, the Scotland Office, Wales Office and Northern Ireland Office, and Whitehall more widely".

There is also a team within the Treasury responsible for the financial aspects of devolution, including the devolution of fiscal powers and management of the Barnett formula.¹¹⁹

The [Home Civil Service](#) (HCS) remains unified despite devolution to Scotland and Wales, while the separate Northern Ireland Civil Service works closely with the HCS.¹²⁰

On 4 July 2019, Lord Dunlop was appointed to produce a [report into the UK Government's Union capability](#). This has yet to be published.

Territorial Secretaries of State

Territorial Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland remained after 1999, although between 2003-10 they were shared with other Cabinet positions. There is a long-running debate as to whether these could be merged into a single department, and for a while the Scotland and Wales Offices became entities of the [Ministry of Justice](#) (and before that the Department for Constitutional Affairs).¹²¹ All such proposals have been rejected by the UK Government.

The 2002 Memorandum of Understanding gave the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland responsibility for:

promoting the devolution settlement, for ensuring effective working relations between the Government and the devolved administrations, and for helping to resolve any disputes which may arise.¹²²

After 2007, their role became predominantly one of intergovernmental mediation and facilitation between UK Government departments and

¹¹⁷ Cabinet Office, [Devolution Guidance Note 1: Common Working Arrangements](#)

¹¹⁸ The [Northern Ireland Office](#) is not part of the UKGG but works closely with it.

¹¹⁹ [Governing in an Ever Looser Union](#), p33-34.

¹²⁰ Richard Parry, "[The Civil Service and Intergovernmental Relations in the Post-devolution UK](#)", *British Journal of Political and International Relations* 14:2, 2012, p297.

¹²¹ See Robert Hazell, [Three into One Won't Go: The Future of the Territorial Secretaries of State](#), Constitution Unit, March 2001, p5.

¹²² Scottish Government, [Devolution: Memorandum of Understanding and supplementary arrangements](#), January 2002.

the devolved administrations. Working closely with the Cabinet Office, the territorial departments also assumed responsibility for legislative proposals to further develop the devolution settlements, including the *Scotland Acts* 2012 and 2016 and the *Wales Acts* 2014 and 2017.

The role of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was slightly different, in that it had a statutory responsibility for dealing with legislation emanating from the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Devolution Guidance Notes viewed the role as that of “an honest broker” in relations between the Executive and UK Government.¹²³

The Sewel Convention

Following devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, a constitutional convention (known as the [Sewel Convention](#)) emerged, under which the UK Parliament would “not normally” legislate on devolved matters without the consent of the relevant legislature.¹²⁴

If one of the devolved legislatures is content for Westminster to legislate on its behalf, then it passes a Legislative Consent Motion. Between 1999-2007, 79 of these were passed in the Scottish Parliament.¹²⁵ Holyrood denied legislative consent for the first time over the UK’s *Welfare Reform Bill* in 2011. In May 2018 the Scottish Parliament also refused consent for the *European Union (Withdrawal) Bill*, which was subsequently granted Royal Assent.

The Welsh Parliament has refused consent on eight occasions, the first being the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill* in 2011. The Northern Ireland Assembly has withheld consent just once, for the *Enterprise Bill* in 2015.¹²⁶

English Votes for English Laws

Following the outcome of the Scottish independence referendum on 18 September 2014, the then Prime Minister David Cameron said:

We have heard the voice of Scotland – and now the millions of voices of England must also be heard. The question of English votes for English laws – the so-called West Lothian question – requires a decisive answer.¹²⁷

The [McKay Commission](#) on the “consequence of devolution for the House of Commons” had reported in March 2013, and from October 2015 many of its recommendations were given effect in changes to House of Commons Standing Orders so that Members of Parliament from England, or from England and Wales, could give their consent to legislation that affected only England, or England and Wales, and which

¹²³ Cabinet Office, [Devolution Guidance Note 5: The Role of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland](#), 2007.

¹²⁴ See Commons Library Briefing paper CBP-8274, [Brexit: Devolution and legislative consent](#), 29 March 2018.

¹²⁵ Paul Cairney, [“Intergovernmental Relations in Scotland: what was the SNP effect?”](#), 18 October 2010.

¹²⁶ Institute for Government, [“Brexit and the Sewel \(legislative consent\) Motion”](#), 17 May 2018.

¹²⁷ UK Government Press Release, [“Scottish Independence Referendum: statement by the Prime Minister”](#), 19 September 2014.

was within devolved legislative competence.¹²⁸ This procedure became known as [English Votes for English Laws](#).

Territorial Select Committees

Three House of Commons Select Committees covering Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish affairs were also retained following devolution in the late 1990s, although their remits were altered to allow scrutiny of only non-devolved areas.

The [Scottish Affairs Committee](#) examines the expenditure, administration and policy of the [Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland](#), including its relations with the Scottish Parliament, while the [Welsh Affairs Committee](#) does the same for the [Office of the Secretary of State for Wales](#). The [Northern Ireland Affairs Committee](#), meanwhile, scrutinises the work of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. There also exist Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Grand Committees, but these meet infrequently, if at all.¹²⁹

6.7 Interparliamentary relations

There is currently no formal role for the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly in scrutinising intergovernmental relations. A [Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee](#) report called inter-parliamentary relations the “poorer and less well-developed relative of IGR”.¹³⁰

The main forum for relations between legislatures in the British Isles is the [British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly](#) (BIPA). Established in 1990 as the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body, it was intended as a link between the Houses of Parliament in London and the Houses of the Oireachtas in Dublin.

In 2001, membership was enlarged to include the Scottish Parliament, the then National Assembly for Wales, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Tynwald and the States of Guernsey and Jersey. It was renamed in 2008 to “reflect a new era of relations between Britain and Ireland”.¹³¹

The [Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit](#) was also established in October 2017 to “support more effective scrutiny of the Government’s handling of Brexit”. It comprises chairs of the committees scrutinising Brexit-related issues in the House of Commons, House of Lords, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament and – when power-sharing institutions are fully functioning – the Northern Ireland Assembly.¹³²

¹²⁸ See Commons Library Briefing Paper 07339, [English votes for English laws](#), 20 June 2017.

¹²⁹ UK Parliament website, [Grand Committees](#)

¹³⁰ See Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, [The Future of the Union, part 2: Inter-institutional Relations in the UK](#), 29 November 2016, p26. See also Adam Evans, [“Inter-parliamentary relations in the United Kingdom: devolution’s undiscovered country?”](#), *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* (early access view).

¹³¹ British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly website, [“About the Assembly”](#) [accessed 21 July 2018].

¹³² Lords Select Committee, [“Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit holds first meeting”](#), 2017.

7. Devolved political leaders

7.1 First Ministers of Scotland

- Donald Dewar MSP (17 May 1999 – 11 October 2000)¹³³
- Henry McLeish MSP (26 October 2000 – 8 November 2001)¹³⁴
- Jack McConnell MSP (22 November 2001 – 16 May 2007)
- Alex Salmond MSP (16 May 2007 – 19 November 2014)
- Nicola Sturgeon MSP (19 November 2014 –)

7.2 Presiding Officers of the Scottish Parliament

- Sir David Steel MSP (12 May 1999 – 7 May 2003)
- Sir George Reid MSP (7 May 2003 – 14 May 2007)
- Sir Alex Fergusson MSP (14 May 2007 – 11 May 2011)
- Tricia Marwick MSP (11 May 2011 – 12 May 2016)
- Ken Macintosh MSP (12 May 2016 –)

7.3 First Secretaries and First Ministers of Wales

- Alun Michael AM (12 May 1999 – 9 February 2000)¹³⁵
- Rhodri Morgan AM (9 February 2000 – 9 December 2009)
- Carwyn Jones AM (9 December 2009 – 12 December 2018)
- Mark Drakeford AM (13 December 2018 –)

7.4 Presiding Officers of Senedd Cymru/the Welsh Parliament

- Lord (Dafydd) Elis-Thomas AM (12 May 1999 – 11 May 2011)
- Dame Rosemary Butler AM (11 May 2011 – 11 May 2016)
- Elin Jones AM (11 May 2016 –)

7.5 First Ministers of Northern Ireland

David Trimble MLA (UUP) (1 July 1998 – 1 July 2001, 6 November 2001 – 14 October 2002)¹³⁶

¹³³ Jim Wallace was Acting First Minister of Scotland from 11-26 October 2000.

¹³⁴ Jim Wallace was again Acting First Minister from 8-22 November 2001.

¹³⁵ Following his resignation as First Secretary, Alun Michael held several UK ministerial posts. On 15 November 2012, he was elected the first Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales.

¹³⁶ In 1998, Ulster Unionist MLA Sir Reg Empey served as Acting First Minister of Northern Ireland. David Trimble joined the House of Lords in 2006 and left the UUP a year later to become a member of the Conservative Party.

Ian Paisley MLA (DUP) (8 May 2007 – 5 June 2008)

Peter Robinson MLA (DUP) (5 June 2008 – 11 January 2010, 3 February 2010 – 10 September 2015, 20 October 2015 – 11 January 2016)¹³⁷

Arlene Foster MLA (DUP) (11 January 2016 – 9 January 2017, 11 January 2020 –)

7.6 Deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland

Seamus Mallon MLA (SDLP) (1 July 1998 – 6 November 2001)

Mark Durkan MLA (SDLP) (6 November 2001 – 14 October 2002)

Martin McGuinness MLA (Sinn Féin) (8 May 2007 – 20 September 2011, 31 October 2011 – 9 January 2017)¹³⁸

Michelle O'Neill MLA (Sinn Féin) (11 January 2020 –)

7.7 Northern Ireland Assembly Speakers

Lord Alderdice MLA (Alliance) (1 July 1998 – 29 February 2004)

Eileen Bell MLA (Alliance) (8 May 2007)

William Hay MLA (DUP) (8 May 2007 – 13 October 2014)

Mitchel McLaughlin MLA (Sinn Féin) (12 January 2015 – 12 May 2016)

Robin Newton MLA (DUP) (12 May 2016 – 11 January 2020)

Alex Maskey MLA (Sinn Féin) (11 January 2020 –)

7.8 Mayor of London

Ken Livingstone (4 May 2000 – 4 May 2008)

Boris Johnson (4 May 2008 – 9 May 2016)

Sadiq Khan (9 May 2016 –)

7.9 Mayors of Combined Authorities

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough James Palmer (Conservative, 2017 –)

Greater Manchester Andy Burnham (Labour, 2017 –)

Liverpool City Region Steve Rotherham (Labour, 2017 –)

North of Tyne Jamie Driscoll (Labour, 2019 –)

Sheffield City Region Dan Jarvis (Labour, 2018 –)

Tees Valley Ben Houchen (Conservative, 2017 –)

West of England Tim Bowles (Conservative, 2017 –)

West Midlands Andy Street (Conservative, 2017 –)

¹³⁷ In 2007 and 2011, DUP MLA Arlene Forster served as Acting First Minister of Northern Ireland.

¹³⁸ During 2011, Sinn Féin MLA John O'Dowd served as acting Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

8. Further reading

Websites

Memorandum of Understanding:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devolution-memorandum-of-understanding-and-supplementary-agreement>

Devolution Guidance Notes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devolution-guidance-notes>

United Kingdom Supreme Court: <https://www.supremecourt.uk/>

Between [1999-2005](#) and [2006-2009](#), the Devolution Monitoring Programme at [The Constitution Unit](#) produced regular – and comprehensive – accounts of the devolution settlement in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Devolution in Scotland

Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/>

Scottish Parliament: <http://www.parliament.scot/>

Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe):

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/research.aspx>

Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (formerly the Scotland Office): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-secretary-of-state-for-scotland>

Devolution in Wales

Welsh Government: <http://gov.wales>

Welsh Parliament: <http://www.assembly.wales>

Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (formerly the Wales Office): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-secretary-of-state-for-wales>

The History of Welsh Devolution: <https://senedd.wales/en/abthome/role-of-assembly-how-it-works/Pages/history-welsh-devolution.aspx>

Key events in the development of Senedd Cymru/the Welsh Parliament: <https://senedd.wales/en/bus-home/research/bus-assembly-publications-monitoring-services/Pages/Key-Events-Home.aspx>

Devolution in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Executive: <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland Assembly: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe): <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/research-and-information-service-raise/>

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/secretary-of-state-for-northern-ireland>

British-Irish Council: <https://www.britishirishcouncil.org/>

North-South Ministerial Council:
<https://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/>

History of the Northern Ireland Assembly (1998-2007):
<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/general-information/history-of-the-assembly/>

Devolution in London and England

Mayor of London: <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/mayor-london>

Combined Authorities:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devolution-and-mayors-what-does-it-mean>

Publications

Scotland

James Mitchell, *The Scottish Question*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014

Mark Lazarowicz & Jean McFadden, *The Scottish Parliament: Law and Practice*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018

Hamish Macdonell, *Uncharted Territory: The Story of Scottish Devolution 1999-2009*, London: Politico's, 2009

Duncan McTavish (ed), *Politics in Scotland*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2016

Wales

Russell Deacon, Alison Denton and Robert Southall, *The Government and Politics of Wales*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018

Martin Shipton, *Poor Man's Parliament: Ten Years of the Welsh Assembly*, Bridgend: Seren, 2011

Northern Ireland

Siobhán Fenton, *The Good Friday Agreement*, London: Biteback, 2018

Derek Birrell & Cathy Gormley-Heenan, *Multi-Level Governance and Northern Ireland*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

London and England

Tony Travers, *The Politics of London: Governing an Ungovernable City*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

Craig Berry & Arianna Giovannini (eds), *Developing England's North: The Political Economy of the Northern Powerhouse*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018

Michael Kenny, *The Politics of English Nationhood*, Oxford: OUP, 2016

9. Devolved elections

9.1 Scottish Parliament elections, 1999-2016

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION RESULTS													
	Share of vote (%)						Seats won						
	SNP	CON	LAB	LD	GRN	Other	SNP	CON	LAB	LD	GRN	Other	Total
<i>Constituency seats</i>													
1999	28.7%	15.6%	38.8%	14.2%	..	2.7%	7	0	53	12	0	1	73
2003	23.8%	16.6%	34.6%	15.4%	..	9.6%	9	3	46	13	0	2	73
2007	32.9%	16.6%	32.1%	16.2%	0.1%	2.2%	21	4	37	11	0	0	73
2011	45.4%	13.9%	31.7%	7.9%	..	1.1%	53	3	15	2	0	0	73
2016	46.5%	22.0%	22.6%	7.8%	0.6%	0.5%	59	7	3	4	0	0	73
<i>Regional seats</i>													
1999	27.3%	15.4%	33.6%	12.4%	3.6%	7.7%	28	18	3	5	1	1	56
2003	20.9%	15.5%	29.3%	11.8%	6.9%	15.7%	18	15	4	4	7	8	56
2007	31.0%	13.9%	29.2%	11.3%	4.0%	10.6%	26	13	9	5	2	1	56
2011	44.0%	12.4%	26.3%	5.2%	4.4%	7.8%	16	12	22	3	2	1	56
2016	41.7%	22.9%	19.1%	5.2%	6.6%	4.5%	4	24	21	1	6	0	56
<i>Total</i>													
1999	..	..	..	..	..	..	35	18	56	17	1	2	129
2003	..	..	..	..	..	..	27	18	50	17	7	10	129
2007	..	..	..	..	..	..	47	17	46	16	2	1	129
2011	..	..	..	..	..	..	69	15	37	5	2	1	129
2016	..	..	..	..	..	..	63	31	24	5	6	0	129

9.2 Welsh Parliament elections, 1999-2016

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES ELECTION RESULTS											
	Share of vote (%)					Seats won					
	CON	LAB	LD	PC	Other	CON	LAB	LD	PC	Other	Total
<i>Constituency seats</i>											
1999	15.8%	37.6%	13.5%	28.4%	4.7%	1	27	3	9	0	40
2003	20.0%	40.0%	14.1%	21.2%	4.7%	1	30	3	5	1	40
2007	22.4%	32.2%	14.8%	22.4%	8.2%	5	24	3	7	1	40
2011	25.0%	42.3%	10.6%	25.0%	2.8%	6	28	1	5	0	40
2016	21.1%	34.7%	7.7%	21.1%	16.0%	6	27	1	6	0	40
<i>Regional seats</i>											
1999	16.5%	35.4%	12.5%	30.5%	5.1%	8	1	3	8	0	20
2003	19.2%	36.6%	12.7%	19.7%	11.9%	10	0	3	7	0	20
2007	21.5%	29.6%	11.7%	21.0%	16.1%	7	2	3	8	0	20
2011	22.5%	36.9%	8.0%	17.9%	14.7%	8	2	4	6	0	20
2016	18.8%	31.5%	6.5%	20.8%	22.4%	5	2	0	6	7	20
<i>Total</i>											
1999	..	..	..	..	..	9	28	6	17	0	60
2003	..	..	..	..	..	11	30	6	12	1	60
2007	..	..	..	..	..	12	26	6	15	1	60
2011	..	..	..	..	..	14	30	5	11	0	60
2016	..	..	..	..	..	11	29	1	12	7	60

9.3 Northern Ireland Assembly elections, 1998-2017

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS												
	Share of vote (%)						Seats won					
	1998	2003	2007	2011	2016	2017	1998	2003	2007	2011	2016	2017
DUP	18.1%	25.3%	30.1%	30.0%	29.2%	28.1%	20	30	36	38	38	28
Sinn Féin	17.6%	23.2%	26.2%	26.9%	24.0%	27.9%	18	24	28	29	28	27
UUP	21.3%	22.3%	14.9%	13.2%	12.6%	12.9%	28	27	18	16	16	10
SDLP	22.0%	16.7%	15.2%	14.2%	12.0%	11.9%	24	18	16	14	12	12
Alliance	6.5%	3.6%	5.2%	7.7%	7.0%	9.1%	6	6	7	8	8	8
UK Unionists	4.5%	0.8%	1.5%	...	...	...	5	1	0	...	...	...
NIWC	1.6%	0.8%	...	...	...	...	2	0	...	...	...	...
PUP	2.5%	1.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.9%	0.7%	2	1	1	0	0	0
People before Profit Alliance	...	...	0.1%	0.8%	2.0%	1.8%	...	...	0	0	2	1
TUV	...	...	...	2.5%	3.4%	2.6%	...	...	...	1	1	1
UKIP	...	...	...	0.6%	1.5%	0.2%	...	...	...	0	0	0
Green Party	0.1%	0.4%	1.7%	0.9%	2.7%	2.3%	0	0	1	1	2	2
Others	5.8%	5.6%	4.4%	2.8%	4.8%	2.7%	3	1	1	1	1	1

9.4 London Mayoral elections, 2000-16

LONDON MAYORAL ELECTION RESULTS						
Mayor		Share of 1st preference votes (%)				
		CON	LAB	LD	GRN	Other
2000	Ken Livingstone	27.1%	13.1%	11.9%	2.2%	45.7%*
2004	Ken Livingstone	29.1%	36.8%	15.3%	3.1%	15.7%
2008	Boris Johnson	43.2%	37.0%	9.8%	3.2%	6.8%
2012	Boris Johnson	44.0%	40.3%	4.2%	4.5%	7.0%
2016	Sadiq Khan	35.0%	44.2%	4.6%	5.8%	10.4%

*Ken Livingstone, as an Independent in 2000, obtained 39.0%

9.5 Elected Metro Mayors, 2017-19

METRO MAYORS			
Combined Authority	Name	Year Elected	Party
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	James Palmer	2017	Conservative
Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham	2017	Labour
Liverpool City Region	Steve Rotheram	2017	Labour
Tees Valley	Ben Houchon	2017	Conservative
West of England	Tim Bowles	2017	Conservative
West Midlands	Andy Street	2017	Conservative
Sheffield City Region	Dan Jarvis	2018	Labour
North of Tyne	Jamie Driscoll	2019	Labour

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