

STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE The outcome of the Scottish Referendum and the Implications for Wales

DATE 23 September 2014

BY Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister

I will take this opportunity to update Members on developments since last Thursday when the people of Scotland affirmed their wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. There is time to debate these matters fully tomorrow so my statement will be brief.

I spoke to the Prime Minister on Friday. I told him how much I – and most members of this Assembly – welcomed the positive choice that the people of Scotland have made: to remain part of the United Kingdom. But the status quo has gone. Events in Scotland have swept it away and there can be no going back to the way things were.

I made clear to the Prime Minister, once again, how vital it is that the future of the UK is developed through a process involving all members of the UK family. This doesn't mean that we can't move forward on devolution proposals for the different countries. However, we must move on from short term sticking plaster solutions to whatever may be the controversy of the day. There must now be a wider process to draw up a settlement reflecting the aspirations of all of the UK's constituent parts. It is time for our constitution to be put on a coherent footing.

I can do no better than echo the words of Lord Nick Bourne that we have got to look at all parts of the United Kingdom, because change in one affects the position in all the others.

Wales's position in all this has been clear and consistent. We have a platform for reform founded on all-party consensus. Full implementation of Silk 1 – including fair funding for Wales and removal of the lockstep – would do a great deal to pave the way to further reform. We then want to see swift implementation of Silk 2. And, as we said in our response to Silk 2, we stand ready to consider other proposals that may be on the table for Scotland. These must be offered to Wales too, in line with the presumption of devolution where practicable – that is our starting point. We can then consider whether they are right for Wales.

The Prime Minister said on Friday that he wants a balanced settlement, fair to people in Scotland and to everyone in England, Wales and Northern Ireland too. He said that he wants Wales to be at the heart of the debate. I will hold him to that promise.

