

“A Welsh legal jurisdiction and a devolved justice system is inevitable” Counsel General tells Legal Wales conference

Making the law accessible is vital to enable citizens to understand their rights and responsibilities under the law – something that has become increasingly important since repeated cuts have been made to legal aid and to other services designed to advise those in need of assistance or representation.

Addressing an audience of legal professionals the Counsel General set out his plans to improve accessibility, through a series of initiatives. The first of these initiatives is the Legislation (Wales) Bill which will be introduced later this year. This Bill will set Wales on a new journey to develop clear, accessible codes of law – a first for the UK.

The Counsel General told delegates that the bill will be accompanied by a draft Taxonomy of Codes, which will aim to organise Welsh law into comprehensive codes by the subject areas devolved to Wales.

Moving on from the bill the Counsel General expanded on other initiatives in place to improve accessibility. He said:

“We are working with the National Archives whose role it is to publish Welsh laws to develop a clearer and more accessible system of categorisation of law, prior to its future consolidation. This will enable us to organise the publication of legislation by subject matter, rather than by the date it is made, which will be a significant breakthrough.”

During his address the Counsel General discussed his intentions to re-launch the Law Wales website. He said:

“This site already serves a useful purpose but it remains a work in progress and its content is limited. I recognise that the content on the website falls short of people’s expectations, not least mine. If each of us as practitioners, legislators, academics, commentators and others in the Welsh legal community shared a small part of our experience and expertise, by producing content for Law Wales, this would have a huge impact. Collectively we can transform this asset from something that is little known and under used into a genuine public good for the people of Wales.”

Bringing his speech to a close the Counsel General commented:

“A process has begun to create a distinct legal infrastructure for Wales. This is a process that won’t stop. The process of making laws for Wales won’t stop, the divergence in laws between Wales and England won’t stop. The creation of a Welsh legal jurisdiction and the devolution of the justice system is inevitable.”