



Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

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## **Consultation on the Draft Determination for the Seventh Senedd**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to take part in the above consultation. The Draft Determination for the Seventh Senedd (the Determination) sets out the arrangements for the pay, staffing and business support of Members of the Senedd, and is therefore a very important document that can have a far-reaching influence on the culture and practices of Members and their staff.

Our response will focus on the relevance of the document, and related documents, to the Welsh language and to the Senedd's Official Languages Scheme (the Scheme).

In my evidence to the Reform Bill Committee at the time of scrutiny of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 I stated that:

*'I believe that this increase in the size of the Senedd is a golden opportunity to introduce new linguistic working practices among Senedd Members and to reconsider whether the existing infrastructure*

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*that supports Senedd Members is sufficient to ensure that Members are able to fully scrutinise bilingual Welsh legislation, and sufficient to encourage and enable them to exercise their right to use the Welsh language fully in their work as Members. Consideration should be given at this point to how to address all barriers that mean that Members do not use the Welsh language and that sufficient investment and planning is in place to support Senedd Members to work through the medium of Welsh in this new context. By starting to plan now this is a truly exciting opportunity for our Senedd to innovate to become a truly bilingual legislature.'*

The above comments remain relevant, particularly given that the [2024-25 Annual Report on the Senedd's Official Languages Scheme](#) shows a decrease in the percentage of Senedd Plenary proceedings held in Welsh in 2024-25 compared to 2022-23 (29% compared to 30%), and that Committee proceedings held in Welsh were 3% lower than they were in 2021-22 (9% compared to 12%). To facilitate Members' use of the Welsh language on the floor of the Senedd and in Committees, and to support them in providing Welsh language services to their constituents we believe it is essential that Members have staff who can work in Welsh. To enable this, it is necessary to set out guidance on assessing the linguistic requirements of posts and putting bilingual staff recruitment processes in place. As Commissioner, we have advice that we can share regarding [recruitment practices](#) and [planning for the bilingual workforce](#) that can assist with this.

Of course, the Determination is not going to directly affect the use of the Welsh language on the floor of the Senedd and in its committees. However, it is important that procedures and policy documents such as the Determination, and related documents, take every opportunity to support the realisation of the objectives of the Senedd's Official Languages Scheme and the Government of Wales Act 2006's intention that Welsh and English are the official languages of the Senedd. To do so, policy documents such as the Determination should consider how to mainstream the Welsh language into the work of Members of the Senedd, and encourage a culture that supports increasing use of the language.

Although you as a Remuneration Board are not statutorily required to carry out an impact assessment of the Determination on the Welsh language, we were surprised to see that a Welsh language impact assessment had not been carried out as part of the review of the Determination. There is also no reference to the Welsh language or the Senedd Official Languages Scheme in the Determination or the Job Classification Framework (the Framework) published in July 2025. Together, these documents provide the guidance and funding that will



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enable Members of the Senedd to decide to which job family and pay-band a job should be allocated.

Although the Framework does provide detail about the type of characteristics that apply to jobs, there is no reference whatsoever to the ability to speak Welsh. In order to facilitate Members to be able to operate in accordance with the Senedd Scheme and to serve their constituents in the official languages of Wales we would expect that Welsh language skills would be a vital feature for a number of staff positions working with Members of the Senedd. We encourage you to review the Framework, or make clear through the Determination, the importance of having staff who can work through the medium of Welsh to support the work of Members and guidance on how to do so.

Creating, maintaining and supporting Welsh-language workplaces is a vital part of the strategy for ensuring the vitality of the Welsh language, and is a priority for my office over the next Senedd period. Beyond education, this strategic area has the most significant potential to directly influence people's opportunities to learn and use Welsh, directly contributing to achieving the two main objectives of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy. The ability of elected Members of the Senedd to lead the way and set an example in that context in their workplaces should be supported and facilitated. There is an opportunity to express that in the Determination and Framework, and to encourage Members to consider how they and their staff could contribute to working life through the medium of Welsh.

**Chapter 6** of the draft Determination relates to allowing Members to claim for costs relating to working in their constituencies, and representing them. As you will be aware, the Scheme sets out the expectation that any materials funded by the Commission or the Remuneration Board will be produced bilingually, and is therefore very relevant to this chapter. As part of the chapter, you refer in a footnote to the importance of complying with the Rules and Guidance on the Use of Senedd Resources (the Rules), highlighting in particular rules 7 and 8 which relate to the equal treatment of constituents in using Commission resources, and communication and engagement with constituents using Commission resources. We are of the view that rule 9 of the Rules, which is compliance with the Scheme, should also be added to this footer to remind Members of their language duties.

We hope that the above comments will be of use to you in your consultation, and I am happy to meet you to discuss further. Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute.

Yours sincerely,



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Copy to: Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd