

Review of Staff Pay and Grading

Phase One

Summary of Consultation Responses

July 2024

Background

1. In May 2024, the Board published the final report from Phase One of the Member's Support Staff Pay and Grading review, which was prepared by Beamans. Members and support staff were invited to provide their views on:
 - The practicability and suitability of the Board's preferred model for a revised pay and grading framework or alternative models set out in Beamans' report.
 - The extent to which this would achieve the objectives of the Staffing Review
 - Any equalities issues that should be considered as part of this work
2. The consultation ran from 23rd May to the 27th June 2024.
3. Six responses were received in total:
 - The Labour Group
 - The Conservative Group
 - The Plaid Cymru Group
 - Unite
 - PCS
 - The Senedd Commission
4. This paper provides a high level summary of the consultation responses.

Summary of responses

Views on job families

- 5.** The Board's response to the Phase One report indicated a preference for moving to a pay and grading structure based on job families.
- 6.** Most respondents cautiously welcomed a shift to job families, noting the ability to better align salaries with comparable roles in the labour market that this model provides, while also highlighting a range of issues that it was felt needed to be considered as part of the next phase of the review to ensure that a job families model is fit for purpose (these are outlined below).
- 7.** Respondents who did not express a preference for any of the options outlined in the Phase One report stated this was due to none of the options delivering the increased flexibility they want to see in a new pay and grading framework.

Challenges and issues for consideration as a new framework is developed

- 8.** A number of respondents argued that it is challenging to look at questions about the pay and grading framework separate from the question of the Member's staffing budget (Staffing Expenditure Allowance). There were calls to ensure that these different workstreams are joined up as the review progresses.

Salary Comparators

- 9.** A number of respondents called for a pay survey to be carried out as a matter of urgency, and highlighted the need to ensure the use of appropriate comparators for setting salaries. Many called for comparison with the Senedd Commission, as well as other parliaments and public service roles. Some called for comparison with roles such as government Special Advisors and roles in the Leader of the Opposition's office in Westminster.
- 10.** A number of respondents highlighted the complexity of caseworker roles, and the need to pay particular attention to finding appropriate salary comparators. Roles that involve problem solving and advocacy, such as trade union caseworkers were suggested.
- 11.** Other issues flagged as being relevant to questions of pay benchmarking included the increased level of abuse that political staff encounter, job insecurity and the real Living Wage.
- 12.** A reduced number of pay points for lower pay bands was welcomed in a small number of responses.

Pay progression

13. There were mixed responses on pay progression. Most respondents supported the retention of annual incremental pay increases. Some respondents called for greater flexibility for Members to be able to move staff up the pay points more quickly, particularly in relation to issues of staff retention.

Flexibility

14. A number of respondents highlighted how, in small offices, roles do not always fit neatly into just one job family. There were concerns that a job families framework should not be too restrictive, so that Members can still have flexibility about how they resource their office.

15. Some respondents raised the issue of colleagues often needing to cover other's roles in small offices, and Members needing to vary the focus of their office to respond to workload pressures; the view was that a new system would need to be responsive to this.

Implementation of a new framework

16. There was a general consensus that no-one should lose out as a result of moving to a new framework and that pay protection should be provided. There were calls from most respondents for sufficient support and guidance for Members to ensure that they can effectively undertake the necessary job evaluation exercise.

17. Most respondents called for ongoing engagement and consultation with Members, MSS and trade unions as the next phase of this work progresses.

Staffing Expenditure Allowance Quantum

18. Most respondents highlighted that the current Staffing Expenditure Allowance was not sufficient, and that addressing this will be critical for the Seventh Senedd.

19. Some respondents highlighted difficulties in responding on the issues in this consultation separately from the question of quantum, and noted the need for the different workstreams to proceed in tandem.

Equality

20. A number of responses called for a full and comprehensive equality impact assessment to be carried out as soon as possible. Concern was expressed about the lack of such an

assessment as part of Phase One, noting the need for equality to be considered from the outset to ensure equity.

Wider Issues

21. Respondents also highlighted a number of broader issues which are not directly within scope of the review of pay and grading. These included:

- Pension arrangements
- Redundancy payments
- Continuity of service
- Right to sabbatical leave, unpaid leave and secondments
- Collective bargaining and social partnership.