

Independent Remuneration Board

Strategic Work Programme 2022-26

(Updated May 2023)



Our Purpose and Guiding Principles

Our Purpose

We make independent decisions on the pay and direct support for Members of the Senedd to attract a wide range of capable and diverse candidates and to enable those elected as Members to do their job effectively, ensuring value for money for the Welsh public purse.

Our Guiding Principles

- Our decisions should be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales.
- Our decisions should support the strategic purpose of the Senedd and facilitate the work of its Members.
- Our decisions should be robust, clear, transparent, sustainable, inclusive, and represent value for money for the taxpayer.

Our Goals

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- To enable Members of the Sixth Senedd to do their parliamentary job effectively, in their locality and in the Senedd.
- To prepare a package of pay and support for the Seventh Senedd.

All within a changing constitutional, social, and global context.

Our Strategic Objectives

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- **RESPONSIVE DETERMINATION:** deliver a Determination which responds to Members' changing business needs, citizens' expectations and the evolving constitutional context.
- **A SIMPLER DETERMINATION:** simplify the Determination to provide flexibility for Members to determine their own priorities with proportionate safeguards, in co-operation with the Senedd Commission.
- **A SUSTAINABLE DETERMINATION:** deliver a sustainable model of support, which takes account of diversity needs, the climate change emergency and long-term finances in Wales.
- **PROMOTING TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT:** engage effectively with Members and a wider range of stakeholders to enable effective reviews and promote public trust.

Our Strategic Work Programme

Our strategic work programme, which was agreed in 2022, sets out the our approach for the remainder of the Senedd term. The programme will inform the annual reviews of the Determination as well shaping a new Determination for the Seventh Senedd, set in the context of proposed Senedd Reform.

The Strategic Work Programme includes five thematic reviews, each coordinated by a lead Board member:

- **Ways of Working** – Sir David Hanson
- **Simplification** – Hugh Widdis
- **Staffing Support** – Mike Redhouse
- **Support for Political Parties' Allowance** – Jane Roberts
- **Members' Remuneration and Personal Support** – Elizabeth Haywood

Our Strategic Work Programme

The thematic reviews will be phased during the Senedd term.

The work will be informed by evidence-gathering and research, including comparative information from other legislatures and the experiences and views of Members and Support and Political Group Staff and other stakeholders.

The Board will engage with the Senedd Commission, Members and Members' Support and Group staff to feed into these reviews at appropriate stages.

The Board will seek to coordinate engagement, where possible, with planned Senedd Commission work to minimise the burden on and duplication for Members and staff.

Ways of Working – Sir David Hanson

Scope

- Consider the impact and potential for members and their staff of new ways of working, such as hybrid and remote working, and the importance of sustainability and diversity and inclusion. It is anticipated this work may lead to revisions of the Office and Constituent Liaison Fund (OCLF) in due course and may also apply to other allowances e.g. Travel (Members and staff) and Residential Accommodation Expenditure

Timescale: 2022-24

- **Completed:** Phase 1 during 2022-23 included interviews with Members during the Autumn of 2022 and has led to adjustments to the Determination in light of issues such as homeworking and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment.
- **Next Steps:** Phase 2 during 2023-24 will consider approaches in other Parliaments and further views will also be sought from Members' support and group staff in the Autumn, as part of wider engagement.

Links to Senedd Reform

- Electoral Model

Commission Engagement/Impact

- Significant – including Members' Business Support (MBS) and wider Commission services

Priority Issues for 6th Senedd

- Ensuring home / hybrid working is appropriately supported for staff and Members
- Safe working environments (lone working etc)

Priority Issues for 7th Senedd

- Review the quantum of the OCLF and potential restructuring of the allowance – e.g. funding for office rental/utilities and for research/engagement
- Office Start Up Allowance

Simplification – Hugh Widdis

Scope

- Review the Determination, reducing redundant controls and simplifying the wording and procedures, to make it as simple as possible for Members and Support Staff to understand the Determination, what funding will be made available and how to claim it, and to make it as simple as possible for Members' Business Support (MBS) to apply the regime efficiently, economically and with reduced risk of dispute.

Timescale: 2022-24

- **Completed:** Simplification of the language in the Determination 2023-24 to make it clearer and easier to make claims, with increases to the expenditure sum requiring three quotes and the production of a tracked change version of the Determination
- **Next Steps:** further review of consultation responses, engagement with MBS, Members and Support Staff for future revisions.

Links to Senedd Reform

- Not dependent on Senedd Reform.

Commission Engagement/Impact

- Significant – MBS role, guidance and other regulatory controls

Priority Issues for 6th Senedd

- Ensure any changes made to the Determination are consistent with the principle of simplification
- Clarity on the roles of the Board and Commission in regulating Members' expenditure

Priority Issues for 7th Senedd

- A Determination and claims process that is easy to navigate for users
- Eliminate duplication of provision

Staffing Support – Mike Redhouse

Scope

- To consider the pay and grading of support staff and group staff and the range of roles that may be required to support Senedd Members in the Seventh Senedd, taking into account the implications of proposed Senedd reform
- The review will consider issues of recruitment and retention of staff, benchmarking against comparator jobs, scope for flexibility and simplification for Members, the size of allowance and Determination mandated policies

Timescale: 2023-25

- **Completed:** Provided one-off cost of living increases of £600 in each of 2022-23 and 2023-24 and increased Staffing Allowance for 2023-24 to permit members to employ staff at the top band of the three most senior roles.
- **Next Steps:** Comparative research into staff pay and grading commencing in Summer 2023 with engagement with Members and staff in Autumn 2023

Links to Senedd Reform

- Electoral Reform
- Size of the Senedd

Commission Engagement/Impact

- Totality of support provided to Members/Groups.
- Potential budgetary impact

Priority Issues for 6th Senedd

- Consider the flexibility for Members in the application of the existing pay and grading framework
- Consider any issues regarding staff salaries for remainder of 6th Senedd
- Review of mandated policies

Priority Issues for 7th Senedd

- Quantum of the Staffing Allowance
- A pay and grading framework which a) provides correct staffing roles to support Members' work, and b) supports staff recruitment and retention of suitably qualified / experienced staff

Support for Political Parties' Allowance – Jane Roberts

Scope

- Review the support provided to political parties ahead of the Seventh Senedd.
- Consider the purpose of party support, comparative analysis with other parliamentary funding models (e.g. Short money), and the potential impact and implications on political party support and staffing ahead of, and following, Senedd reform. The review will be informed by the wider staffing review considering issues of pay and grading and recruitment and retention of staff.

Timescale: 2023-25

- **Next Steps:** Comparative research commencing in Summer 2023, with engagement with Members and Political Groups in the Autumn.

Links to Senedd Reform

- Electoral Model
- Group Support
- Standing Orders Review

Commission Engagement/Impact

- Totality of support provided to Members/Groups.

Priority Issues for 6th Senedd

- Any immediate issues arising from the Staffing Review e.g. recruitment and retention issues
- Implications of and impact on Groups to prepare for Senedd Reform

Priority Issues for 7th Senedd

- Purpose and Scope of PPSA in support of parliamentary activity including research/policy development/communications and engagement
- Balance of Support provided – via Senedd Commission, Members' Offices and Group Offices (via PPSA)
- Staffing structure – links to staffing review
- Basis - formula and quantum

Members Remuneration and Personal Support – Elizabeth Haywood

Scope

- Members' remuneration is set in the Determination for the five-year term of the Senedd and may only be changed in exceptional circumstances.
- The review will gather evidence and seek views on any changes required for the Seventh Senedd, taking into account any implications of Senedd reform in terms of numbers of Members and their responsibilities and the range of 'additional office holders' entitled to additional salary. The review will consider Members' salaries, Ministerial and Senedd Office Holder Salaries, Pension Scheme and Residential Accommodation Expenditure, and will seek to remove barriers to support diversity.

Timescale: 2023-25

- **Completed:** a number of changes to the Pension Scheme rules in light of the latest judicial guidance and decisions, having consulted with Members. An additional £1,000 cost of living increase has been included for
- **Next Steps:** Initial comparative work commencing in Autumn 2023 with further comparative research, benchmarking and engagement with Members in 2024-25.

Links to Senedd Reform

- Numbers of Members and Office Holders
- Boundary Reviews

Priority Issues for 6th Senedd

- Only exceptional changes are permitted to the Determination
- Any pension scheme issues that may arise

Commission Engagement/Impact

- Some aspects of support e.g. carers

Priority Issues for 7th Senedd

- MS job evaluation and remuneration benchmarking
- First Minister & Ministerial Pay
- Office Holder Salaries (including the Chief Whip)
- Residential Accommodation Expenditure – map/scope
- Diversity support

Timeline:

Strategic Work Programme & Senedd Reform

Date

- Autumn 2023
- Spring 2024
- Summer 2024
- Autumn 2024-
Spring 2025
- Summer 2025
- Autumn 2025

Senedd Reform

- Bill Introduced
- Stage 1 Debate – first test
- Stage 2 - Amending Stages
- Stage 3 – Amending Stages
- Stage 4 – 40/60 final vote
- Commencement of
Boundary Review (pairing)
- Final Boundaries &
Selection of Candidates?

Board Work Programme

- Board evidence may be required for Bill
- Staffing Review, Ways of Working and Simplification – issues/consultation for annual review of Determination (6th Senedd)
- PPSA review commences
- Staffing Review – recommendations on retention & recruitment/pay and grading issues for 7th Senedd
- Staffing Review – develop proposals for pay and grading for 7th Senedd
- MS Staffing and PPSA – develop proposals for quanta for 7th Senedd
- Member and Office Holder Remuneration, Residential Allowance Expenditure and Additional Support – proposals developed
- Simplification/Ways of Working – structure of allowances including Office and Constituency Liaison Fund
- Emerging issues/consultation for annual review of Determination (6th Senedd)
- Final decisions on Member pay, structure of allowances, level of allowances.
- End of Board term
- New Board
- Consult on final Determination for Seventh Senedd and figures (inflation/indexation etc)