

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

11. Campaigning and influencing

11.7 The National Assembly for Wales Commission



Overview

The National Assembly for Wales Commission was created by the Government of Wales Act 2006. It is the corporate body of the National Assembly for Wales and is responsible for the provision of property, staff and services to support Assembly Members. This information sheet provides further details about the Commission; its role and remit and its relevance to the third sector in Wales.

Role and Remit

The Government of Wales Act 2006 provides the National Assembly for Wales with significant new powers to legislate, and strengthens its scrutiny role. It also separates the Welsh Assembly Government from the National Assembly for Wales and creates a new Corporate Body which is called the National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission).

The Commission has responsibility for the provision of property, staff and services to support the Assembly Members. The Commission consists of the Presiding Officer and four other Members nominated by the main political parties.

In 2007 the Assembly Commission set out its purpose and goals for the 2007 – 2011 period.

Purpose

To make the Assembly an accessible and effective parliamentary body that inspires the confidence of the people of Wales.

Goals

1. We will promote and widen engagement in devolution.
2. We will show unity, leadership, and a bold response to constitutional change.
3. In all our work, we will demonstrate respect, probity and good governance.
4. We will work sustainably.
5. We will ensure that the Assembly has the best service, provided in the most efficient way.

Membership

The Government of Wales Act 2006 maintains that membership of the Assembly Commission will include the Presiding Officer and four other Assembly Members. It sets out the arrangement for the appointment of the four other Assembly Members, and states that there will not be more than one member (other than the Presiding Officer) from the same political group.

The Commission members are:

<p>Presiding Officer Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas</p>	<p>Chair of the Commission and has special responsibility for promoting democratic engagement, excellent leadership, developing the Assembly's future legislative powers and external relations.</p>
<p>Lorraine Barrett (Labour)</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly - This portfolio includes responsibility for equality; language; environment and carbon neutrality; sustainable procurement and estate management.</p>
<p>Peter Black (Welsh Liberal Democrats)</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Assembly and the Citizen -This portfolio includes looking at the quality of scrutiny and the legislative process; external communication; ICT; citizenship education; lawfulness.</p>
<p>Chris Franks (Plaid Cymru)</p>	<p>Commissioner for the Improving Assembly - This portfolio includes looking at Improving services to Members and citizens; involving stakeholders; strategic planning; and considering value for money</p>
<p>William Graham (Welsh Conservative Party)</p>	<p>Commissioner for Assembly Resources - This portfolio includes considering the management of Assembly assets; Assembly people (including employees, contractors, services provided to support AMSS); budget; Members' salaries and allowances; efficiency and good governance.</p>

Staffing

The staff of the Commission are headed by the Clerk to the Assembly who is also the Commission's Chief Executive. The staff come under three directorates which are supported by a corporate unit all of which are accountable to the Chief Executive. The directorates are: Legal Services; Chief Operating Officer; and Assembly Business. The Assembly Business directorate provides specialist parliamentary support to members to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of business. It is made up of the committee service, the legislation and chamber service; the members' research service and the parliamentary translation and reporting service.

Opportunities for the third sector

The Commission aims to improve both understanding of, and engagement with, the work of the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW). This means that there is an opportunity for the third sector to make suggestions to the Commission about how to achieve this aim and in particular how to effectively involve the sector in its work. The Voices for Change Cymru project will be concentrating on this as a key priority and we would welcome any suggestions from organisations who may have ideas on this topic.

It is also useful for third sector organisations to consider ways of engaging with the Assembly Business directorate. The committee service and member's research service in particular can be very helpful to organisations who wish to get involved with Assembly Business. You may wish to consider

providing a description of your organisation's activities and area of interest to committee clerks so that they keep you updated with committee business and can contact you if a relevant committee inquiry is coming up. (For more information on engaging with Committees see our separate information sheet.)

The members' research service is also a useful department to make contact with as it provides confidential and impartial research support to the Assembly's scrutiny and legislation committees, and to all 60 individual Assembly Members and their staff. If you produce any publications, research, reports or publicity it is worth sending it to member's research as well as the Assembly Members themselves. The Member's Research service have leads for different policy areas so it may be worth finding out who leads in your policy area (information available at <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-assembly-publications-research.htm#mrs>) and making contact with them highlighting your expertise and evidence base. You can also access a range of briefings and information produced by the Members' Research Service from their webpages. These are primarily aimed at Assembly Members, but can also be useful for external stakeholders.

Further information

Assembly Commission

You can find out more about the Assembly Commission on the National Assembly for Wales website at www.assemblywales.org/abthome

Or you can contact the Commission using the following contact information

Email: assembly.info@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 0845 010 5500

Typetalk: 0845 010 5500

Minicom: 029 2089 8601

In writing: National Assembly for Wales,
Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Voices for Change Cymru is a WCVA project supported by the Big Lottery Fund. There are now more opportunities than ever to make your voice heard and this project provides services to help third sector organisations influence policy and legislation at local and national levels.

Tel: 0800 2888 329

vfcc@wcva.org.uk

www.voicesforchangecymru.org.uk

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

For further information contact

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