

THE USE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES STATIONERY AND RESOURCES

Introduction

These are the administrative rules for the purposes of paragraph 5 of "The Principles in Practice" of the Assembly's "Code of Standards for Members".

The application and interpretation of the rules set out in the attached annexes must, initially rest on the good sense of the individual Assembly Members. On a day to day basis staff within the Facilities Section of the Presiding Office may provide assistance on their interpretation but ultimately, the House Committee will be responsible for interpretation of these rules. Breaches of these rules will be a matter for the Presiding Officer who will decide whether to refer complaints about breaches to the Committee on Standards of Conduct.

The following annexes have been approved by the Presiding Officer, on the recommendation of the House Committee:

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| The use of headed stationery and Photocopying services | Annex A |
| The use of franked mail and Pre-paid envelopes | Annex B |
| The issue of stationery items | Annex C |
| The use of E-Mail Services | Annex D |
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General

National Assembly for Wales headed stationery, franked mail, pre paid envelopes, general office stationery items, photocopying services, *telephones* and e-mail services are provided at public expense as an allowance for Members and must not be used for purposes which are not properly a charge on public funds. *These resources are provided centrally to Members and are for use in support of their day to day work and duties as Assembly Members in support of National Assembly for Wales business. The resources are not provided to Members in support of their role and*

activities as representatives of a Political Parties. Assembly Members have a duty to consider whether it is proper to use these resources in any given set of circumstances. Issues that might be considered by Members to assess appropriate usage of resources include:

- *The content of any communication and whether it can be considered party political in nature or whether it is in connection with Assembly business;*
- *The intended recipients of any communications and whether this is limited to members of one political party or whether the communication is to constituents in general or to general organisations.*

These suggested issues for consideration are not intended as clear cut rules in themselves, but are suggested areas which may assist Members to consider and assess whether it would be proper to use Assembly resources. Advice on individual cases may be obtained from the Presiding Officer, Director of Corporate Services on extension 8228 or the Head of the Office and Facilities Management Branch on extension 8078.

The use of National Assembly for Wales headed stationery and photocopying services

1. National Assembly for Wales headed stationery (letterheads, compliments slips and envelopes) and photocopying resources and services are provided at public expense and must not be used for purposes that are not properly a charge on public funds.
2. The National Assembly logo must not be used or replicated, and headed stationery and photocopying resources and services should not be used for the following purposes:
 - Communication of a business or commercial nature;
 - Personal correspondence, other than in modest quantities;
 - The correspondence of political groups which include persons other than Assembly Members; or
 - For party political purposes, for example in connection with fund raising for the benefit of a political party, advocating membership of a political party, or supporting the return of any person to public office.

Circulars

3. Members may issue circulars using Assembly resources provided that the circular does not fall within one of the “purposes” listed at paragraph 2 above. Original headed stationery should not however, be used on cost grounds. Members may use the National Assembly logo on any circulars for which it would be acceptable to use Assembly resources, but this should be photocopied in black. For clarification, circulars include the following types of correspondence:
 - A letter sent in identical or near identical form to a number of addresses (whether or not it is individually signed and addressed) if it is unsolicited;
 - A letter sent in identical or near identical form to a number of addresses acknowledging replies to any letter, questionnaire or survey that itself was unsolicited.
 - Common-form coming of age greetings cards or letters, or equivalent communications sent to new constituents.

General Usage and Ordering

4. All party assembly groups may use photocopied headed notepaper in black for correspondence of the group in association with Assembly business with the exception of the rules for circulars in section 3 above.

5. Members should also consider value for money aspects when using National Assembly letterheads and resources that are paid from public money. For example, headed notepaper is expensive and is not appropriate for informal messages to staff or other Assembly Members. In addition, for correspondence within the Assembly building, the use of traveller envelopes or re-using received envelopes is more cost effective than using new envelopes or Assembly printed envelopes.

6. Other means of saving resources and reducing the use of paper include using the blank sides of drafts of documents and papers as paper for rough notes and messages; only printing those documents or papers where a paper copy is required for notes or further action or for filing or record keeping purposes.

Annex B

The use of National Assembly for Wales Franked Mail, Pre-paid Envelopes and Freepost Facility

1. Franked mail posted from the National Assembly building and pre-paid envelopes and the freepost facility are provided from public funds and must not be used for purposes that are not properly a charge on public funds.
2. Pre-paid envelopes are for use by Assembly Members when posting items from their Constituency Office in connection with an Assembly Member's duties.
3. The Freepost facility is provided for Members to post correspondence and materials from their Constituency Office to the Assembly Building only.
4. Franked mail posted from the Assembly Building and pre-paid envelopes and the freepost facility should not be used:
 - For correspondence of a business, commercial or personal nature;
 - For the correspondence of political groups which include persons other than Assembly Members;
 - For correspondence or circulars for party political purposes, for example in connection with fund-raising for the benefit of a political party, advocating or inviting membership of a political party or supporting the return of any person to public office;
 - For internal mail
5. Only urgent items should be sent via First class mail. All mail franked in the post room will be sent via Second Class postage unless envelopes are marked First Class. First and Second Class pre-paid envelopes will be supplied, only urgent items should be sent via First class mail.

6. Personal or political mail sent from the Assembly building must contain a stamp. It is not possible for the cost of franked mail to be recharged to Members.
7. Franked mail and pre-paid envelopes may be used for all party assembly groups correspondence in connection with Assembly business.

Annex C

The use and issue of stationery items to Assembly Members

1. The stationery items issued to Members are provided from public funds and must not be used for purposes that are not properly a charge on public funds.
2. Assembly members may order stationery for their National Assembly office and for their Constituency office by using the stationery proforma.
3. The stationery items listed on the proforma are regarded as standard stationery items (eg pens, post it notes, note pads, envelopes). Any stationery items not listed should be requested in the space provided at the bottom of the proforma. Where possible the stationery suppliers own brand and lowest cost option will be purchased in favour of branded items for value for money reasons (eg cardboard rather than plastic magazine files).
4. Any items requested which are not considered by the Facilities Section to be stationery items will not be purchased centrally (eg clocks, briefcases, filofax, or items of office equipment). Such items are to be purchased directly by Members from their office costs allowance. If a Member disagrees with the decision of the Facilities Section, the issue will be referred to the Presiding Officer for a final decision.

The use of E-Mail Services

E-Mail services provided from the National Assembly Building are provided from public funds and must not be used for purposes that are not properly a charge on public funds. In addition all persons using E-Mail should be aware that the E-Mail system is not a private medium and that an appropriate standard of care and attention should be given to the format and content of E-Mail communications as with all other forms of written communication.

As E-mails can easily be misconstrued, you must consider carefully whether E-mail is the appropriate form of communication in particular circumstances and if you decide that it is, consider carefully the contents of the E-mail and who the recipients should be. It is inappropriate to send E-mails and/or attachments to people (whether they are other employees of the Assembly or third parties) if the E-mail does not relate to them or if the attachment cannot be read by them. In addition, sending E-mails needlessly to other people wastes their time and needlessly sending wrong files or attachments will cause delays in the system.

E-mail carries legal risks for the user and the Assembly (called "vicarious liability") from the accidental or deliberate infringement of laws including but not limited to :

- i) Defamation;
- ii) Obscene and blasphemous material;
- iii) Discrimination/harassment by fact of sex, race or disability;
- iv) Unwanted contracts;
- v) Copyright;
- vi) Data protection and privacy;
- vii) Computer crime.
- vii) *Human rights*

In addition, as the E-Mail system is not a private medium, it is important that nothing is contained within an E-Mail, which can be considered potentially offensive, whether to the recipient or any other person. Jokes or comments that may seem innocent to one person can cause serious offence to another.

The National Assembly for Wales has strict rules for its own staff governing discrimination and harassment which when applied can lead to formal disciplinary proceedings and ultimately the person or persons being sacked. There is also the issue of the National Assembly's reputation being affected, and it becoming liable to legal action, where such E-Mail travels outside the office with the National Assembly's domain name (*wales.gov.uk*) on it.

Misuse and/or inappropriate use of the E-mail system would be a matter for the Presiding Officer in the first instance. Dependent on the level and nature of the incident, the Presiding Officer may, where appropriate, refer the matter to the Standards Committee.

The following E-Mail types should have the E-Mail disclaimer at the footer.

“Any of the statements or comments made above should be regarded as personal and not necessarily those of the National Assembly for Wales, any constituent part or connected body”.

- For correspondence of a business, commercial or personal nature;
- For the correspondence of party political groups which include persons other than Assembly Members;
- In connection with fund-raising for the benefit of a political party, or supporting the return of any person to public office;
- For party political circulars;

Accessing private web based E-mail accounts such as Hotmail and Freeserve from the OSIRIS network is not permitted due to the risk of virus infection.

Sending E-mail to, and receiving E-mail from web based email accounts such as Hotmail and Freeserve is allowed, but files attached to such E-mails should not be opened. Such a file should be copied to disk and “sheep dipped” or forwarded to the BISD IT Protection Officer for checking.

Use of stationery and resources during election campaigns

In addition to the rules contained in Annexes A - D, which will also apply to use of resources during election campaigns, further specific rules are provided below in relation to election campaigns.

National Assembly for Wales headed stationery, franked mail, pre-paid envelopes, freepost facility, general office stationery items, photocopying services, telephones and email services should not be used in respect of party political activity and campaigning in the run up to elections. Specifically, campaigning for the return of a candidate to the National Assembly for Wales, Local Government, Westminster or European elections is not considered to be part of the normal duties of a Member of the Assembly. These activities should not be supported by the use of any resources provided centrally to Members.