

To: All Members

Cc: All support staff

14 October 2020

Dear Member,

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd held its first formal meeting as a new Board on 23 and 24 September 2020. We are grateful for the warm welcome we have already received and look forward to meeting and working with you over the course of our term in office.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dame Dawn Primarolo and Trevor Reaney for their work on the Board over the past five years. I am sure you will join me in wishing them both well for the future.

At our first meeting we considered our working arrangements and future work programme for the coming year. We also made an important decision related to Members' salaries.

The following is a summary of our discussions and decisions at that meeting and since.

### ***Covid-19***

The Board noted that Welsh regulations and guidance concerning Covid-19 restrictions had been amended over the summer, and there remains fluidity in changes with regards to restrictions. The Board considered this in light of how Members and their offices can be supported. The Board is of the view that the provisions in place, at this time, are sufficient. However, the Board will be reviewing the situation and the support available to Members and their offices at every meeting for the foreseeable future to ensure that it is appropriate and the if circumstances change the Board can make swift decisions.

The Board agreed to provide further clarity on the end date of the Home Working Allowance. On 2 July, the Board agreed to continue the allowance until such time as Welsh Government regulations enable working restrictions, for non-key workers, to be eased. Given the continued pandemic, and the recent changes to restrictions for local lockdowns the Board has now agreed that the Home Working Allowance will end at the dissolution of the Fifth Senedd.

Finally the Board considered the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Fund that closed on 25 September 2020. Members are reminded that should they need to undertake a DSE assessment, an online tool is available to them to undertake an assessment at home. Any costs related to adjustments will now be met from their Office Costs Allowance.

The Board will keep the situation under review. As ever, the Board stands ready to support Members in these exceptional and uncertain times.

***Exceptional determination of the Board relating to changes to the salaries of Members and additional office holders***

As you will be aware, on the 24 September, the Board made an exceptional determination at its meeting with regards to Members' salaries. Details of the Board's decision on this matter can be found in our letter to you (dated 29 September) and on the [Senedd website](#).

As outlined in our letter to you, the Board is clear that this decision will not pre-empt any future decisions concerning the indexation of salaries for the Sixth Senedd. The Board intends to consider the salary indexation provision that is included in the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances in the Sixth Senedd (Determination for the Sixth Senedd) at its next meeting in November. We will write to you again following the meeting should we intend to propose any changes.

***Forward work plan for 2020-21***

The Board agreed to consider a number of other issues related to the Determination for the Sixth Senedd, including:

- Office costs;
- Residential Accommodation costs;
- Political Parties Support Allowance;
- Centrally funded stationery costs;
- Support staff contract;
- Security provision for Members;
- Support staff pension scheme;
- Arrangements for travel to the EU.

The Board will consider these matters in more detail in November with the intention on publishing a consultation document setting out any proposed changes before the Christmas recess.

***Ways of working***

The Board also discussed its working arrangements during its term in office, in view of the recommendations of the review of the previous Board's efficacy. This includes how the Board engages with Members and support staff.

To this end, the Board agreed to arrange meetings with both the Member and support staff Representative Groups as soon as possible. The Board is keen to continue the positive working relationships established with the Groups and looks forward to engaging with them on a regular basis.

The Board also considered how it engages with stakeholders and its processes for consulting with them. The Board will review these processes as it proceeds with its work over the coming months. However, should you have any suggestions that the Board should consider, please do let us know via the secretariat.

I hope you have found this update useful. As noted in our letter on 29 September, it is our intention to continue providing such updates following meetings and to make this letter publicly available through our website. Should you have any feedback on any of the matters above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Though I have taken over chairing the Board at a time where it is difficult to meet in person, I am always happy to meet individual Members and I hope to meet as many of you as I can in due course, remotely or otherwise. If you would like to discuss anything with me, please contact the Board's secretariat on [remuneration@senedd.wales](mailto:remuneration@senedd.wales) to make arrangements.

Best wishes and stay safe,



**Dr Elizabeth Haywood**

**Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.