

Proposed creation of an Access Fund

Evidence and Feedback

In August and September 2011, Members were asked to provide feedback on how the Commission could better support them in discharging their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Below is a summary of the evidence received.

- A number of Members raised concerns about communicating with people who speak little or no English. One Member wrote that having to use office costs “has proven prohibitive and, as a result, I am no longer able to translate letters for constituents.” This Member has relied on voluntary translators in order to provide a service to their diverse constituents. The Member goes on to state, “many of these people who are unable to speak, read or write in English, are amongst the most vulnerable in our society – a position greatly exacerbated by the language barriers they may encounter.” The feedback from responding Members agreed that it would be beneficial to have a separate budget to cover such costs.
- Feedback also highlighted the need for a budget to cover communication support for Members’ meetings with disabled constituents, including support for Cross-Party Groups. One Member stated that “any member of the public should have equal access to Assembly Members regardless of their disability.” They went on to state that providing such communication support “should not result in higher individual office costs.”
- Evidence has also been collected on the need for a budget to cover the provision of reasonable adjustments for Members and their support staff. This would include modifications to an office space and the provision of specialist equipment such as a text phone.