



Elin Jones AC, Llywydd

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Elin Jones AM, Presiding Officer

National Assembly for Wales

Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government
Kirsty Williams AM, Minister for Education
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
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08 March 2019

Dear Julie and Kirsty

Thank you for your letter dated 30 January 2019. As you know, I have now introduced the Senedd and Elections Bill on behalf of the Assembly Commission. This is a significant step forward and as the Bill progresses, Members, stakeholders and the public will expect us to explain and provide assurance that we are putting steps in place to ensure the successful introduction of Votes at 16 in 2021.

As you will be aware, the timetable is tight with a registration campaign required in 2020, and I am keen for there to be materials for schools available in September of this year. Commission officials are ready to work swiftly with Government officials to ensure this work is delivered effectively.

In response to the suggestions in your letter:

Research

I know that our teams of officials have discussed this previously so it is good to see that it is still a priority. I would be interested to understand the timescales for finalising the research. I know that officials have corresponded and are sharing information and research to inform our plans.

Education resources

As you know, the Assembly's dedicated Education and Youth Engagement team is run by experienced teachers who are already engaged with schools, colleges and youth

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

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organisations, providing presentations and workshops in schools and colleges across Wales. This includes teacher training and teaching resources to meet the requirements of the PSE Framework, Welsh Bacculaureate and the A-level Government and Politics course.

To accompany the introduction of the Senedd and Election Bill, the team has developed online resources for school councils, teachers and youth workers to use to discuss lowering the voting age for Assembly elections to 16. These are available on the [Hwb](#) platform.

I also note and agree with your point that the messaging set out in the educational materials and more widely in a communication campaign need to reflect the differing proposals set out in the legislation. The messaging will need to be adapted according to the electoral cycle to highlight the relevant forthcoming elections. To this end, it would be helpful if we agree to collaborate on the development of common messages and narratives.

Resources

In delivering this work, the Assembly Commission is willing to consider making resources available.

Since all Assembly Commission funding comes directly from the Welsh Consolidated Fund, I would not consider it appropriate for the Commission to fund directly the Welsh Government. However, the Commission has set out a budget of £150,000 in the Explanatory Memorandum that accompanies the Bill for promotion and awareness raising. I would be willing to discuss directing this budget in a way that is consistent with an agreed joint approach.

In addition, I would envisage our education team making a substantial contribution to the planning of this work stream through their expert advice and support to ensure that we maximise our resources.

External board

You asked for my suggestions for the stakeholder board.

I would suggest that this should include public sector organisations which represent the electoral community and young people, including .

- The Electoral Commission
- Wales Electoral Coordination Board
- The Association of Electoral Registration Officers
- The Welsh Local Government Association
- The Children's Commissioner



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I would also suggest that the involvement, in an advisory capacity, of other stakeholders from the electoral and youth sector. These might include the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, Bite the Ballot, the Future Generations Commissioner and representatives of youth organisations on the Welsh Youth Parliament Steering group.

I would suggest that our officials meet to discuss the detail of these proposals and explore further the kind of support you would expect from Assembly Commission officials for the Welsh Government Board in order for the External Board to be established as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd