

Bwrdd Taliadau Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol Cymru

—
Remuneration Board of the
National Assembly for Wales

31 March 2017

Dear Assembly Member,

On 23 March, the Remuneration Board met to discuss future work which will inform our thinking for the remainder of the Board's term and to consider the annual review of the Determination. The following is a summary of the Board's discussion and decisions following our latest consultations and a brief update on our work programme.

Assembly Member Support Staff and Assembly Member salaries 2017-18

The Board agreed to increase AMSS salaries for 2017-18 by 2.1% in line with the provisional 2016 figures for the change in median earnings in Wales, as measured by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The change will be implemented on 1 April 2017. This is same index as is applied automatically to the pay of Members and Office Holders.

The Board noted a response relating to how the changing nature of devolved politics and the additional requirements placed on AMs could impact upon AMSS and the complexities around provision for Senior Advisers. We have committed to exploring these issues in more detail in our work programme later this year.

As set out in the Determination for the Fifth Assembly, the pay of Members and Office Holders is automatically adjusted each year by the change in median earnings in Wales, as measured by ASHE. Member and office holder salaries will increase from April, therefore, in the same way as AMSS pay.

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg/We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

Office costs for 2017-18

The Board agreed to increase the office costs allowance by 1.2% for 2017-18, in line with the CPI estimate as at November 2016.

Members may apply for Exceptional Expenses in writing to the Chair if they believe that the allowance is insufficient for their particular circumstances.

Residential Allowances for 2017-18

The Board considered Residential Accommodation Expenditure (RAE) for 2017-18 at our meeting in January and, to inform our decision on the support for outer area Members, conducted more research into rental prices in Cardiff Bay to ensure that there was an up-to-date proposal having taken account of the most recent rental figures.

The Board consulted Members on 15 March on a proposal to increase RAE allowance from its current level of £735 per month to £775 per month to reflect current conditions in the local property market.

The Board would like to remind Members that the [consultation](#) closes on 13 April 2017.

General Update

Security of constituency offices

Members will be aware that a security review has been undertaken throughout Members' constituency offices in Wales. The review identified a number of measures necessary to enhance security. The Board were concerned that delays had occurred in implementing security equipment in some offices. The Board would like to emphasise the urgency in ensuring that your offices are safe and secure. The Board has rolled over the fund for security provisions into the new financial year 2017-18.

Overtime claimed by AMSS

The Board considered the latest figures for overtime claimed by AMSS and agreed to monitor the number of overtime claims submitted by Assembly Member Support Staff. The Board would like to emphasise the importance of a good work life balance and to ensure that Members are fulfilling their duty of care as employers.

Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform

The Board considered how best to engage with the Llywydd's Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform and agreed that there needed to be close working on any issues which may impact the determination for the Sixth Assembly, in

particular relating to our work on incentives and barriers to running for election to the Assembly.

Seminar on the operation of remuneration bodies from across the UK and Ireland

In May, the Board will host a seminar with remuneration bodies from across the UK and Ireland to share best practice, discuss key issues and learn and understand how colleagues in each legislature are meeting the challenges posed by further devolution and changes in the economic climate.

Barriers and incentives to running for election to the National Assembly for Wales

We will shortly be commissioning research to gain a greater understanding of aspects that may deter individuals from standing for election to the Assembly and aspects within the Board's remit that attract people to the job.

We will inform Members when the successful candidate has been appointed.

The underpinning principles and effectiveness of the Determination

In line with our commitment to regularly review the performance of the Board and the impact of our decisions, we will conduct reviews into the existing provisions which were put into the Determination for the Fifth Assembly. We want to hear from you and your support staff on the benefits of the current Determination and ways that we can improve it. During the spring we will issue a questionnaire on the effectiveness of the current Determination and the principles underlying the provision of financial support, in particular whether the current approach strikes the right balance between prescription and flexibility, empowering Members to use funds wisely, with the right level of checks and balances.

In the first instance, we will work closely with the AM and AMSS Representative Groups to pilot these questionnaires to ensure that they cover the areas that you would like to be addressed. Going forward, the results from these questionnaires and face-to-face discussions will help shape our forward work programme.

The new AMSS Representative Group met for the first time on 23 March and the new AM Representative Group will meet for the first time on 4 April.

We will ensure that Members, their support staff and other key stakeholders are kept fully abreast of our progress and involved at key stages.

This letter will also be published on our website as is our usual practice.

If you would like to discuss this matter with me, or with one of my fellow Board members, please do not hesitate to contact me via the secretariat.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Dawn Primarolo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dame Dawn Primarolo
Cadeirydd / Chair
Bwrdd Taliadau/Remuneration Board