

Dignity and Respect Survey: Results report

June 2018



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this document can be found on the National Assembly website: **www.assembly.wales**

Copies of this document can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print, audio or hard copy from:

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Tel: **0300 200 6565**

Email: **Contact@assembly.wales**

Twitter: **[@AssemblyWales](https://twitter.com/AssemblyWales)**

© National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2018

The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the National Assembly for Wales Commission and the title of the document specified.

Dignity and Respect Survey: Results report

June 2018



Contents

Introduction	4
Participation	5
Questions: Section 1	6
Questions: Section 2.....	9
Questions: Section 3.....	12

Introduction

In their update statement on **16 February 2018**¹, the Llywydd, Chair of our Standards of Conduct Committee and party leaders re-stated their commitment to “continue building on the framework we have in place in order to create the right culture and to ensure that we have accessible policies, procedures and support for those coming forward to discuss their concerns”.

The importance of the views of individuals was emphasised so that it could build into the ongoing work of the Standards of Conduct Committee’s inquiry to ensure that the Assembly was creating the right atmosphere to enable people to discuss concerns or complaints about conduct.

As part of that work, we wanted to establish whether we were planning appropriately and to look at the experiences of inappropriate behaviour at the Assembly, in constituency offices or any other place that individuals undertake their work.

The Assembly Commission anonymously surveyed Assembly Members, Assembly Member Support Staff and Assembly Commission staff. The online survey opened on 19 April and closed on 11 May 2018 providing just over three weeks for individuals to provide their views.

We asked participants whether they worked for the Assembly Commission, for an Assembly Member or political group or whether they were an Assembly Member.

¹ <http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/Pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1820>

Participation

The survey was available to all 60 Assembly Members, around 250 Assembly Member Support Staff and around 450 Assembly Commission staff.

128 responses to the first part of the survey were received representing a participation rate of 16.8% of those invited to participate.

- 81 respondents said that they worked for the Assembly Commission (18.0% of Assembly Commission staff)
- 42 respondents said that they worked for an Assembly Member or political group (16.8% of staff who worked for an Assembly Member or political group)
- 5 respondents were Assembly Members (8.3% of Assembly Members).

Throughout the survey, we asked participants to ensure that they did not enter any sensitive information which might identify themselves or someone else.

We are also mindful of the small number of Assembly Members who participated in the survey. The following information is not broken down into groups of participants therefore.

Questions: Section 1

We asked:

One of the aims of our work on Dignity and Respect is to bring greater clarity and accessibility to anyone wishing to use a complaints procedure or to discuss their concerns. These will be clarified on our website.

However we would like to know, at this stage, do you know how to access advice or to report inappropriate behaviour?

Respondents said:

120 of the 128 respondents answered this question. Over half (55.8%) stated that they know how to access advice or to report inappropriate behaviour.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	67	55.8
Not sure	36	30.0
No	17	14.2
TOTAL	120	100.0

We asked:

During the consultation process, a number of suggestions were made to strengthen policy and practice. These included:

- *improved accessibility to policies and procedures*
- *someone to talk to confidentially about concerns without making an actual complaint*
- *clarity about the support available for those making complaints and those against whom allegations have been made*
- *additional protection against inappropriate behaviour for those who use our premises for work purposes*
- *improved awareness-raising at everyone's induction and on an ongoing basis*

All of these are being built into the revised arrangements. However, we would like your views on any other improvements we could make. A free text box is provided below. Please ensure that you don't enter any sensitive information which might identify yourself or someone else.

Respondents said:

32 comments were made. In addition to comments welcoming the inclusive and consultative approach being taken to the proposed improvements, responses have been grouped into the following themes:

Induction and continuous professional development (CPD)

Suggestions included enhancing support to line managers to resolve issues at an early stage; proactive performance management and associated training; compulsory training to include awareness sessions during induction as well as for existing staff. Provision of periodic refresher training - including Assembly Members. Ensure individuals are aware of their rights. Empowerment for individuals to resolve issues informally where possible.

Internal communications

Reinforce policies, embed the improvements being put in place, think of other novel ways of promoting the culture e.g. notices on payslips, posters and ensure momentum is maintained.

Clarity

Ensure policies and related HR policies are clear, applied consistently, aligned and up to date; that complaint routes remain accessible and understood by those thinking of making a complaint

Contact Officers

Generally welcomed as it provides a confidential advisory step without committing to making a formal complaint. Important that Contact Officers are able to conduct confidential conversations in Welsh. A suggestion that Contact Officers should be independent of the Assembly.

Posters

These were welcomed as they provided an opportunity for individuals to consider the information away from their desks.

Questions: Section 2

In this section we asked about individuals' experiences and whether they had personally experienced inappropriate behaviour.

The first three questions followed the pattern of the civil service-wide survey enabling us to benchmark against a wider cohort of participants. Questions aimed to establish whether individuals had experienced, observed or been accused of inappropriate behaviour.

We asked:

*Have you ever **experienced** inappropriate behaviour while working for the National Assembly for Wales Commission or for an Assembly Member/Group as an Assembly Member Support Staff?*

Respondents said:

112 of the 128 respondents answered this question. Over three fifths (61.6%) stated that they had never **experienced** inappropriate behaviour while working for the National Assembly for Wales Commission or for an Assembly Member/ Group as an Assembly Member Support Staff.

	Number	Percentage
No, never.	69	61.6
Yes, on multiple occasions.	32	28.6
Prefer not to say.	6	5.4
Yes. Once.	5	4.4
TOTAL	112	100.0

We asked:

*Have you ever **observed** inappropriate behaviour of someone else while working for the National Assembly for Wales Commission or for an Assembly Member/Group as an Assembly Member Support Staff?*

Respondents said:

109 of the 128 respondents answered this question. Over half (54.1%) stated that they had never **observed** inappropriate behaviour while working for the National Assembly for Wales Commission or for an Assembly Member/ Group as an Assembly Member Support Staff.

	Number	Percentage
No, never.	59	54.1
Yes, on multiple occasions	29	26.6
Yes. Once.	13	11.9
Prefer not to say.	8	7.3
TOTAL	109	100.0

We asked:

*Have you ever been **accused** of inappropriate behaviour?*

Respondents said:

105 of the 128 respondents answered this question. The majority (95.2%) stated that they had never been **accused** of inappropriate behaviour while working for the National Assembly for Wales Commission or for an Assembly Member/ Group as an Assembly Member Support Staff.

	Number	Percentage
No, never.	100	95.2
Yes.	5	4.8
Prefer not to say.	0	0.0
TOTAL	105	100.0

We asked:

If you have experienced or observed inappropriate behaviour but not reported it, please tell us why.

Respondents said:

37 comments were received. These have been grouped into the following themes:

Trust in process

Complaint was against a more senior official or Assembly Member and trust in whether organisation would side with them; reporting inappropriate behaviour would have career repercussions; concern about whether complaint would be addressed appropriately, fairly or be taken seriously; previous experience of little being done to address incidents or issues not being acted upon. Easier not to report because of the stress involved.

Knowledge

Did not know how to complain.

Informal resolution

Issues sorted out informally; not felt to be bad enough to report; issue didn't seem deliberate.

Questions: Section 3

The final section of the survey was entirely optional and provided the opportunity to share a bit more about personal experiences of bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour. We asked whether participants had witnessed it, been accused of it or whether they had provided support to someone e.g. as a line manager, trade union representative or work colleague.

These questions again followed the pattern of the civil service-wide survey enabling us to benchmark against a wider cohort of participants.

Participants were offered the opportunity to proceed with the survey or to skip to the end.

In recognition of the fact that asking questions about personal experiences may be difficult, everyone participating was reminded of the range of support available to them.

- 74 skipped to the end of the survey.
- 54 answered the following questions.

We asked:

Which, if any, of the following situations of inappropriate behaviour have you experienced (please tick all that apply)

Respondents said:

54 respondents answered this multiple choice question.

Question	Responses
I have been the subject of inappropriate behaviour	27
I was a witness who observed incident(s) of inappropriate behaviour	24
I have been the line manager to the subject of inappropriate behaviour	6
I have been line manager to someone who was accused of inappropriate behaviour	6
I have been accused of inappropriate behaviour	4
I have been a Union representative supporting the subject of inappropriate behaviour	3
I have been a Union representative supporting someone accused of inappropriate behaviour	1
<p>Other (please specify but please don't enter any sensitive information which might identify yourself or someone else)</p> <p>Though many respondents to this question stated 'none' or 'N/A', the remaining comments are grouped as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ comment taken the wrong way but challenged ▪ support to member of staff who had witnessed and reported an incident ▪ information shared by third parties about cases or of specific situations heard about 	16

We asked:

*Whether, based on participants' experiences, they agreed that those **subjected to** inappropriate behaviour were treated fairly after reporting it and whether they were well supported.*

Respondents said:

48 and 47 participants respectively answered these two questions. Over a third of respondents marked 'don't know' in answer to both questions. Respondents were more likely to agree to some extent (25.0%) that those subjected to inappropriate behaviour were treated fairly after reporting an experience. In contrast respondents were more likely to disagree to some extent (25.5%) that those subjected to inappropriate behaviour were well supported after reporting an experience.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
Were treated fairly after reporting it	5 (10.42%)	4 (8.33%)	10 (20.83%)	6 (12.50%)	6 (12.50%)	17 (35.42%)
Were well supported after reporting it	4 (8.51%)	8 (17.02%)	6 (12.77%)	5 (10.64%)	5 (10.64%)	19 (40.43%)

We offered participants the opportunity to explain their answers. The 18 comments are grouped into general themes:

Reporting: A number of participants said that they didn't report an incident; that it was resolved locally in discussion; that issue was excused as a one-off and a concern was expressed that investigations take too long and involve other people.

Feedback: Once concerns of unprofessional behaviour were passed on, no feedback on action taken was received. Participants didn't know whether individuals were treated fairly or well supported.

Knowledge: Lack of knowledge on what or how to report.

We asked:

*Whether, based on participants' experiences whether they agreed that those **accused** of inappropriate behaviour were treated fairly and whether they were well supported.*

Respondents said:

47 answered this part of the survey. Over forty percent of respondents marked 'don't know' in answer to both questions. Respondents were more likely to disagree to some extent (14.9%) that those accused of inappropriate behaviour were treated fairly after reporting an experience. Similarly respondents were more likely to disagree to some extent (19.2%) that those accused of inappropriate behaviour were well supported after reporting an experience.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
Were treated fairly	5 (10.64%)	2 (4.26%)	14 (29.79%)	2 (4.26%)	4 (8.51%)	20 (42.55%)
Were well supported	6 (12.77%)	3 (6.38%)	11 (23.40%)	2 (4.26%)	4 (8.51%)	21 (44.68%)

We offered participants the opportunity to explain their answers. The 14 comments are grouped into general themes:

- Adequate support was not provided
- Accused treated better than complainant; support geared towards the protection of senior staff rather than the complainant
- Allegations made via the media and were not afforded the appropriate right of reply.

We asked:

Whether there were any additional points that participants would like to make.

Respondents said:

22 comments were made and these are grouped into themes:

Culture

It has improved and the greater clarity and highlighting the procedures is welcomed. Some had confidence in the organisation based on experiences elsewhere and felt that this was a safe environment and that the Assembly cared about people who work here. A high degree of professional behaviours displayed. More needs to be done to build confidence in procedures. The work we are undertaking needs to be meaningful.

Procedures

Using formal procedures should be last resort; where possible try to sort out issues informally. Performance Management systems should be used more effectively.

Politicians/Senior staff

A perception that some politicians or senior staff display unreasonable behaviours and this is excused rather than tackled. Difficult to report if person is in line management chain.

