

National Assembly for Wales
Assembly Commission

Creating a Parliament for Wales: Consultation report

October 2018



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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.

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Creating a Parliament for Wales: Consultation report





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Background

On 1 April 2018, in accordance with the Wales Act 2017, the National Assembly for Wales became responsible for its own electoral, organisational and internal arrangements.

Previously, these powers rested with the UK Parliament.

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.

The Assembly Commission serves the National Assembly to help facilitate its long-term success as a strong, accessible, inclusive and forward-looking democratic institution and legislature that delivers effectively for the people of Wales.

The Commission consists of the Llywydd (Presiding Officer) and four other Assembly Members nominated by the main political parties in the National Assembly. It has responsibility for the provision of property, staff and services to support the National Assembly.

The Assembly Commission has decided to use the powers in the Wales Act 2017 to legislate, before 2021, to change the name of the institution to Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru – a name which reflects the weight of responsibility held by the legislature and its Members, and which will be recognised and understood by those it serves.¹

In order to further explore how the new powers in the Wales Act 2017 could be used to make our parliament a more effective, accessible and diverse legislature, an Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform ('the Expert Panel') was established by the Assembly Commission in February 2017. The Expert Panel's role was to provide politically impartial advice on the number of Members the Assembly

¹ National Assembly for Wales Commission, '*Written statement: Assembly reform programme*', 13 June 2017

needs, the most suitable electoral system, and the minimum voting age for Assembly elections.²

The Expert Panel published its report, *A Parliament that Works for Wales*, in December 2017.³ The report contains 16 recommendations for change, which the Panel believed should be implemented before the 2021 Assembly election.

The National Assembly for Wales unanimously agreed on 7 February 2018 to consult on the Expert Panel's recommendations. The Assembly Commission therefore published a consultation seeking the views of the public, experts, stakeholders and others on the Expert Panel's recommendations and other proposals for changes to the Assembly's electoral, organisational and internal arrangements.

The consultation ran from 12 February 2018 to 6 April 2018. This report sets out the consultation findings.

² National Assembly for Wales Commission, *'Written statement on the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform'*, 1 February 2017

³ Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, *A Parliament that Works for Wales*, December 2017

The Assembly Commission's Consultation

How we consulted

To raise awareness of the consultation, engage with the public and stakeholders and make it as easy as possible for people to respond, we:

- Published a consultation document and response form.
- Published an Easy Read consultation document and response form.
- Published an accessible website and online surveys.
- Held four public events across Wales.
- Organised targeted engagement with stakeholders and experts.
- Ran workshops and focus groups with over 400 young people on the Expert Panel's recommendation that 16- and 17-year-olds should be able to vote in Assembly elections.
- Communicated through traditional and social media.
- Engaged in discussions with political parties.
- Engaged with visitors to the Assembly.

The response to the consultation

We provided a series of different online surveys to give people the choice of responding to all of the issues covered in the consultation or to specific issues of interest to them. For the purpose of analysis, all responses have been collated. This includes online surveys, consultation response forms, Easy Read response forms, emails and other correspondence.

We received over 3,200 consultation submissions, the majority through the online surveys. Respondents were able to respond to the consultation more than once, for example by responding to more than one of the issue-specific online surveys. For this reason, the 3,200 submissions cannot be directly equated to 3,200 separate respondents. However, analysis of the consultation responses suggests that only a small number of respondents completed more than one online survey.

Of the 3,200 submissions:

- 200 were from people who identified themselves as being under the age of 18.
- 37 were from companies or organisations, including private businesses, public bodies, academic institutions, voluntary organisations, charities, political parties and representative bodies.
- 10 per cent were received in Welsh and 90 per cent were received in English.

The results of the consultation

This part of the report sets out the findings of the consultation based on analysis of the written submissions. It also provides a summary of the views on the minimum voting age for Assembly elections shared by young people during focused workshops.

The numbers of responses shown in the findings include all responses from individuals and organisations, and have been rounded to the nearest ten. The figures shown in brackets are the numbers of responses that gave a specified answer, expressed a specified view or raised a specified issue.

For some questions, responses provided by organisations have been analysed separately as well as alongside individuals' responses. As the numbers of responses to specific questions by organisations were very low, actual numbers are shown rather than rounded numbers.

The consultation included both multiple choice and open questions. Within the analysis of responses to multiple choice questions, percentages do not always add up to exactly 100 as they have been calculated using the actual number of responses and then rounded to the nearest complete one per cent. Responses to open questions were grouped according to views expressed or themes raised. We then calculated the percentage of the responses to each open question which fell within the thematic groups. The report outlines the most commonly-raised views and themes only. These percentages do not, therefore, add up to 100. See Annex 3 for a more detailed explanation of how responses to the consultation were analysed.

This report contains quotes from some of the responses received to the consultation. Where responses quoted were received in Welsh only, the quoted parts have been translated into English by Assembly Commission translators for inclusion in this report.

1. How many Members does the Assembly need?

The consultation asked whether people agreed with the Expert Panel that the number of Assembly Members should be increased, and what the costs and benefits of changing the size of the Assembly might be.

Key findings

- Of the 1,830 responses to questions on the number of Members the Assembly needs, 56 per cent (1,030) of responses were in favour of more Assembly Members, 39 per cent (710) were opposed and five per cent (90) were unsure or did not express a preference.
- Of the 1,030 responses in favour of increasing the number of Assembly Members, 95 per cent (980) agreed with the Expert Panel's recommendation of an increase to between 80 and 90 Members. Four per cent (40) suggested more than 90 Members and one per cent (10) suggested 61-79 Members.⁴
- Of the 710 responses opposed to increasing the size of the Assembly, 68 per cent (480) did not suggest how many Assembly Members there should be. 13 per cent (90) of those opposed to an increase wanted the number of Members kept at 60, nine per cent (60) wanted fewer than 60 Members and 10 per cent (70) wanted the Assembly to be abolished altogether.
- A majority of the organisations that responded to the consultation supported an increase in the number of Assembly Members.⁵
- The main reasons given for supporting an increase in the number of Assembly Members were: more effective representation; greater diversity and range of views; a stronger voice for Wales; better scrutiny of the

⁴ There are currently 60 Assembly Members.

⁵ Responses provided by organisations are also included in the total number of responses to consultation questions noted throughout this report.

Welsh Government; better debates, policy and legislation; and greater accountability.

- The main reasons given for opposing an increase in the number of Assembly Members were the additional cost and the impact of the cost on the delivery of public services.

Summary of responses

We asked:

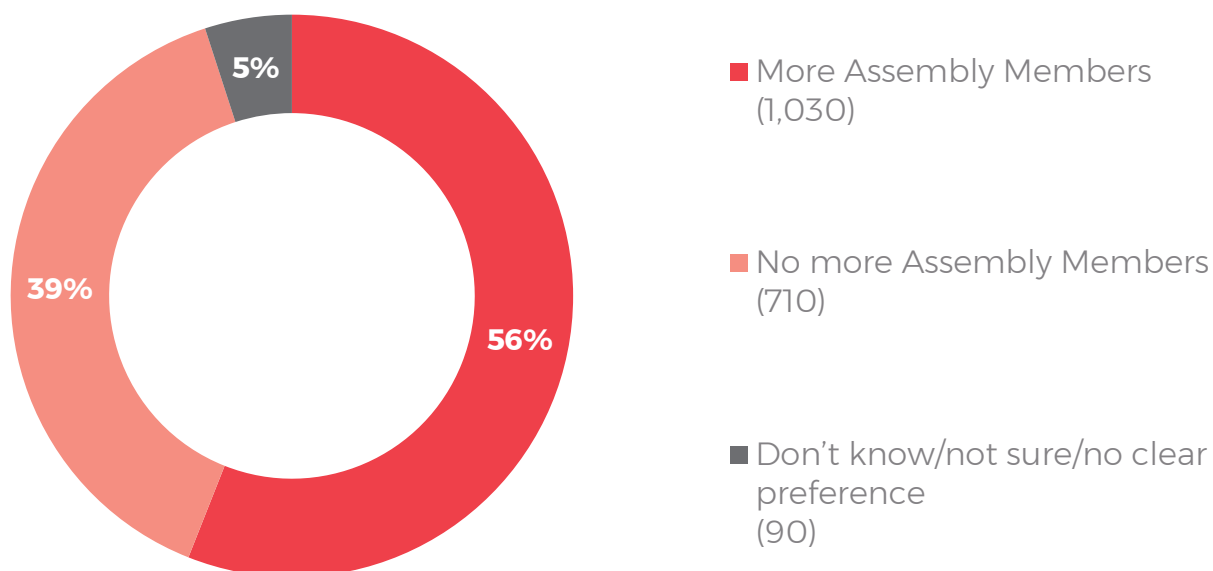
Question 1. The Expert Panel has concluded that the Assembly needs to have between 80 and 90 Members to carry out its role effectively. Do you agree? Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 2. Would changes to the number of Assembly Members result in: i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

A total of 1,830 responses were received to one or both of these questions.

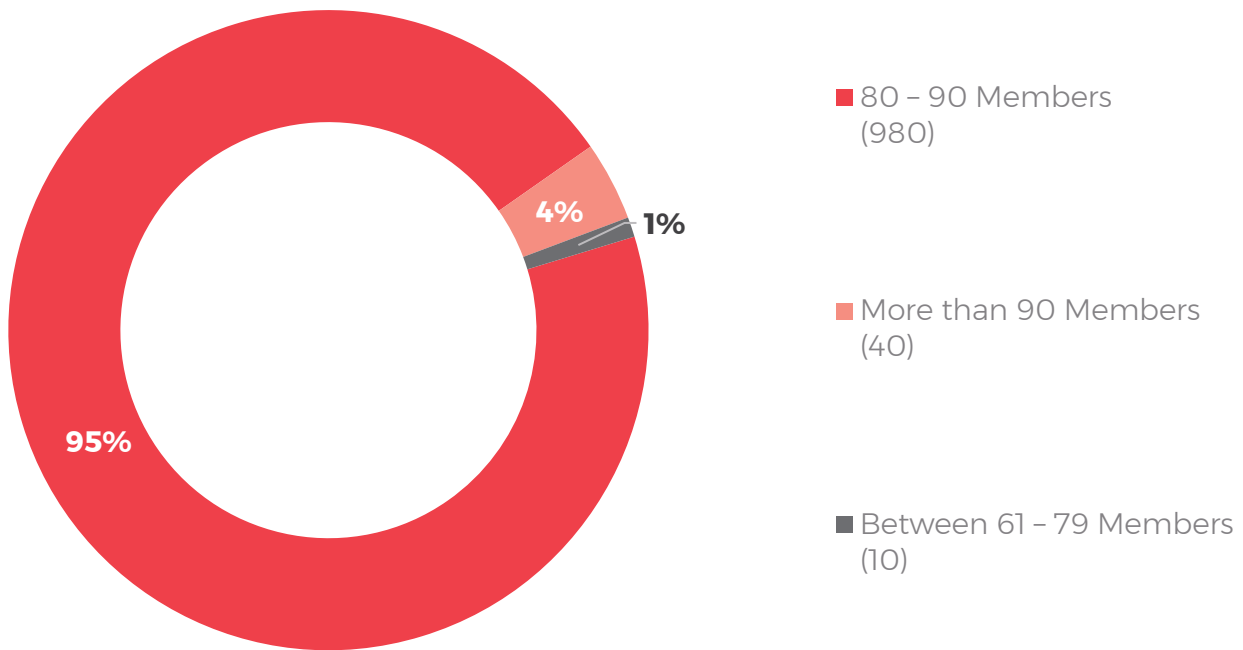
Of these 1,830 responses, 56 per cent (1,030) were in favour of more Assembly Members, 39 per cent (710) were opposed and five per cent (90) were unsure or did not express a preference.

Figure 1: Views on Expert Panel's recommendation that there should be more Assembly Members



95 per cent (980) of the 1,030 responses in favour of the proposal to increase the number of Assembly Members agreed with the Expert Panel’s recommendation of an increase to between 80 and 90 Members. Four per cent (40) of responses suggested more than 90 Members and one per cent (10) suggested 61-79 Members.⁶

Figure 2: The number of Members the Assembly needs according to those in support of a larger Assembly



19 per cent (340) of the 1,830 responses to question 1 and/or 2 suggested more Members would allow for: more effective representation; greater diversity and range of views; and a stronger voice for Wales. 17 per cent (300) felt that an increase in the number of Members would result in: better scrutiny of the Welsh Government; better debates, policy and legislation; and greater accountability or better access to Members for the public.

The Assembly has had more powers since it was established, with 60 Members. More work, therefore it needs more AMs [Assembly Members].
(Member of the public)

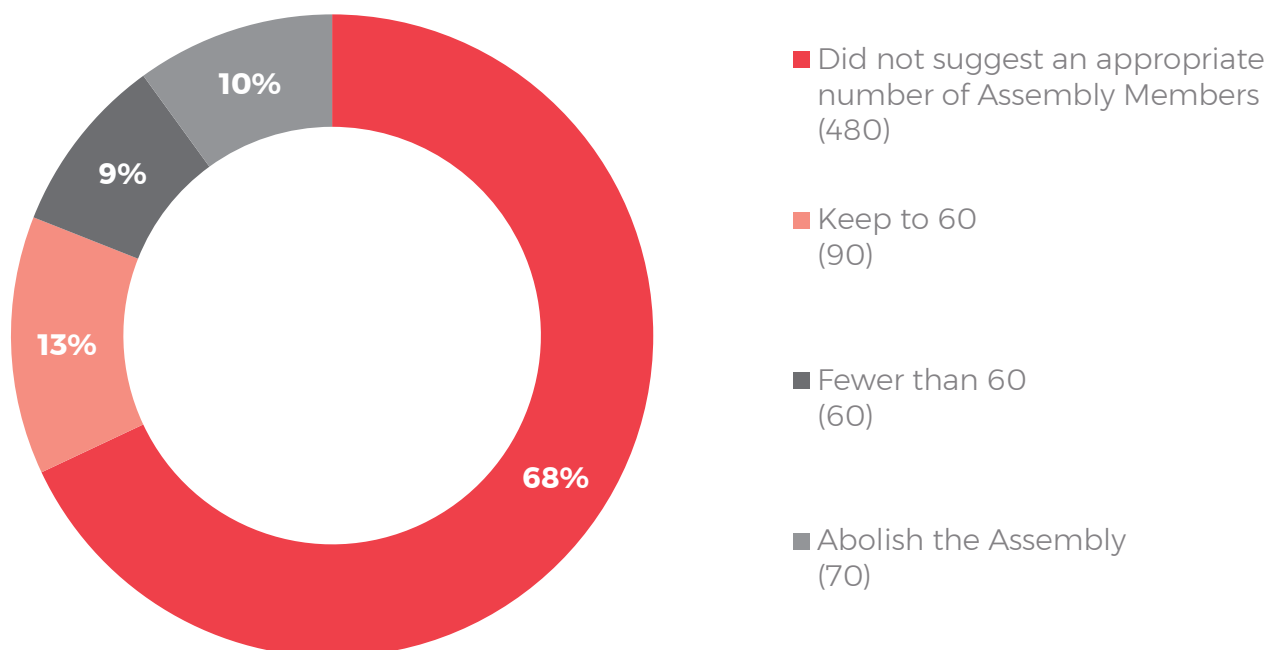
⁶ There are currently 60 Assembly Members.

Other issues raised included:

- The increase in the Assembly's responsibilities as a result of further devolution.
- Comparisons with the size of other Parliaments in the UK and abroad, including comparisons with the number of Members per head of population represented.
- The total number of politicians in Wales, including MEPs, MPs and councillors.

Of the 710 responses opposed to increasing the size of the Assembly, 68 per cent (480) did not suggest an appropriate number of Assembly Members. 13 per cent (90) of those opposed to an increase wanted the number of Members kept at 60, nine per cent (60) wanted fewer than 60 Members and 10 per cent (70) wanted the Assembly to be abolished altogether.⁷

Figure 3: The number of Members the Assembly needs according to those opposed to a larger Assembly



⁷ The numbers shown in brackets here add up to 700. Figure 1 shows that 710 responses opposed an increase to the size of the Assembly. See page 8 for an explanation of the difference in these totals.

Five per cent (90) of the 1,830 responses to questions 1 and/or 2 made suggestions on how to address capacity issues without increasing the number of Assembly Members. Suggestions included:

- A longer working week.
- Shorter recess periods.
- More efficient working by Assembly Members.
- The sharing of responsibilities between Assembly Members and Welsh Members of Parliament.
- A second scrutiny Chamber in the Assembly.
- Better use of technology.

The costs of an increase in Members was a factor mentioned in 45 per cent (820) of the 1,830 responses to questions 1 and/or 2. This included 67 per cent (480) of the 710 responses opposed to more Members and 30 per cent (310) of the 1,030 responses in favour of more Members. Of the 710 responses opposed to more Members, 16 per cent (110) mentioned the impact on other public service delivery:

My main concern is in terms of the additional expenditure, as given the amount of funding that has been reduced to the Welsh government this could easily come at the expense of funding for local government, education, or healthcare to name just two examples.

(Member of the public)

Most of the organisations that responded to the consultation supported an increase in the number of Assembly Members, including the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, the Wales Committee of the Law Society of England and Wales, the Auditor General for Wales, the Wales Green Party, the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Chwarae Teg, Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, National Union of Students Wales, the Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the Morgan Academy at Swansea University:

The research by the Electoral Reform Society [...] makes clear that an Assembly with only 60 Members leaves only 40 or so Members not holding ministerial or key Assembly office. With only 40 or so Members available, "they cannot give every aspect of their work the priority it deserves. Reading time is a luxury, let alone the opportunity to reflect properly on research and evidence ahead of meetings. The inevitable

result of this pressure is to reduce the quality of scrutiny..."[...] Lack of time for scrutiny is of particular concern to me as Auditor General. It is worrying that resources spent on careful examination and analysis by staff of the WAO may not be being used to their full potential. [...] Scrutiny is essential for holding the Government to account for its spending, as well as examining legislation.

(Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales)

The Electoral Commission and Welsh Local Government Association did not express a view on the number of Members the Assembly needs, suggesting that it was a matter for the Assembly itself to decide.

Four of the five Town and Community Councils that responded to this question opposed an increase in the number of Members. There was also opposition from the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers and the Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party:

Members felt very strongly that given the present financial constraints on government budgets at all levels to spend money on increasing the number of Members in the Assembly/Parliament was deeply inappropriate. They felt that this money would be much better spent on providing local services and amenities. It was felt that the suggested increase in numbers could not be justified.

(Presteigne and Norton Town Council)

Of the 1,000 responses to **question 2i)** on the costs of changes to the number of Assembly Members, 31 per cent (310) highlighted costs that would be incurred by the Assembly itself, for example salaries, support staff, or accommodation. 22 per cent (220) of the 1,000 responses highlighted costs to themselves as individuals, for example additional taxes to pay for the increase. 15 per cent (150) suggested that the additional costs would either have an impact on, or be better spent on, public service provision such as health and education. Nine per cent (90) recognised there would be costs but thought these would be offset by the benefits (almost all of these 90 were among those who were in favour of a larger Assembly). Some responses mentioned more than one of these factors.

Obviously someone will have to pay for extra Members. Ultimately the tax payer in some form or another will meet the cost but hopefully with improved services in Wales the benefits will outweigh those costs.

(Member of the public)

19 per cent (190) of the 1,000 responses to **question 2i)** felt that the costs would be minimal or there would be no additional costs.

Of the 920 responses to **question 2ii)** on the benefits of more Assembly Members, 30 per cent (280) thought there would be no benefit from an increase.

There are no foreseeable benefits to any expansion. I already have 3 councillors, 1 MP, 5 Ams and 4 MEPs that represent me in the relevant institutions.

(Member of the public)

30 per cent (280) of the 920 responses to **question 2ii)** highlighted better representation and/or a stronger voice for Wales as benefits of a larger Assembly. 23 per cent (220) thought that more Members would lead to: better scrutiny of the Welsh Government; better legislation being passed; and better quality of debate or better decisions being made. Eight per cent (70) thought that a larger Assembly would mean easier access to Assembly Members for the public.

2. How should Assembly Members be elected?

The consultation asked questions about how Assembly Members should be elected.

Key findings

- Of 1,330 responses to questions on the three electoral systems recommended by the Expert Panel, 54 per cent (720) indicated a preference for the Single Transferable Vote System, 17 per cent (230) preferred Flexible List Proportional Representation and 16 per cent (210) favoured the Mixed Member Proportional System. 13 per cent (170) of responses did not favour any of these three options put forward by the Expert Panel.
- Of 1,340 responses to a question on diversity, 61 per cent (820) said that they agreed with the Expert Panel's recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales. 30 per cent (400) of responses disagreed with the recommendation and nine per cent (120) said 'don't know'.
- Of the 820 responses from those who answered yes to the question on diversity i.e. that the Assembly's electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales, 47 per cent (380) said this should be achieved via voluntary measures, and 26 per cent (210) said this should be achieved through more formal measures such as gender quotas.
- Of 1,300 responses to a question on job sharing, 34 per cent (440) agreed with the Expert Panel's recommendation that people should be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing. 52 per cent (680) of responses disagreed and 14 per cent (180) said 'don't know'.
- Of 1,240 responses to a question on the Assembly constituencies the Expert Panel recommended should be used to elect a larger Assembly, 40 per cent (500) said that if the Assembly adopted either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation for the election of Assembly Members, then Members should be elected on the

basis of 20 constituencies made up of pairs of the existing 40 Assembly constituencies. 29 per cent (350) of responses preferred a model comprising 17 constituencies based on the existing 22 local authority areas and 31 per cent (380) said 'don't know'.

Summary of responses

Electoral Systems

We asked:

Question 3. The Expert Panel has outlined three possible electoral systems which could operate effectively in Wales to elect an Assembly of at least 80 Members:

- **Single Transferable Vote ('STV')**
- **Flexible List Proportional Representation**
- **Mixed Member Proportional ('MMP', also known as Additional Member System)**

Which of these systems would be most appropriate for electing Assembly Members and why? Please give reasons for your answer.

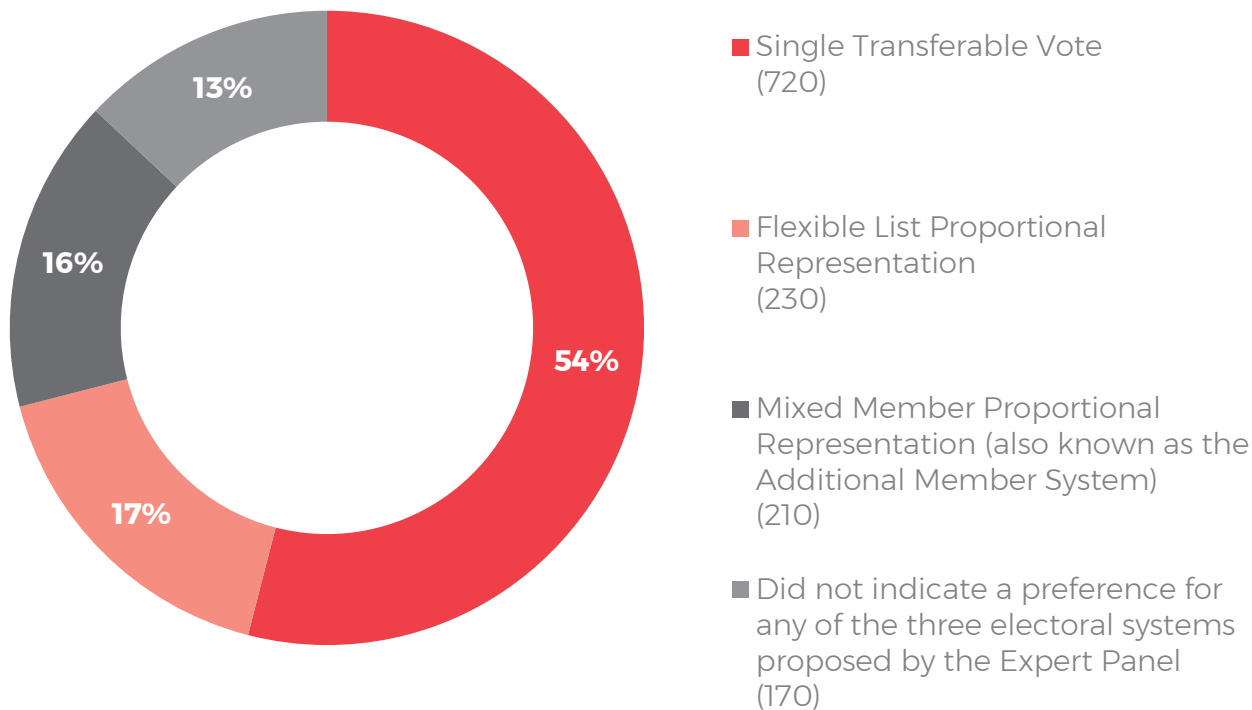
The online surveys and consultation document asked this question in two parts—first a multiple choice question asking respondents to indicate which of the three electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel they preferred, then an open question asking respondents to explain the reasons for their answer. In total 1,330 responses were received to either part or both parts of question 3. Of these 1,330, 1,160 responses only answered the multiple choice part.

Of the 1,160 responses to the multiple choice question which asked respondents to indicate a preference for one of the electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel, 62 per cent (720) favoured Single Transferable Vote, 20 per cent (230) supported Flexible List Proportional Representation, and 18 per cent (210) preferred the current Mixed Member Proportional system.

Some respondents did not answer the multiple choice part of question 3 to indicate a preference for any of the electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel, instead answering only the second part of the question. Of the 1,330 responses to either or both parts of the question, 54 per cent (720) favoured Single Transferable Vote, 17 per cent (230) supported Flexible List Proportional

Representation, 16 per cent (210) preferred the current Mixed Member Proportional system, and 13 per cent (170) did not indicate a preference for any of the electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel.

Figure 4: Views on the Expert Panel's recommended systems for the election of Assembly Members



Of the three electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel, Single Transferable Vote was very clearly the most preferred. This was true both among those who supported a larger Assembly and among those who did not. The proportions of responses favouring Flexible List Proportional Representation or the current Mixed Member Proportional system were both low.

Of the 720 responses who supported Single Transferable Vote, 54 per cent (390) did not explain why. Reasons given by those who did provide explanations included:

- The proportionality of the Single Transferable Vote electoral system.
- Greater voter choice, in particular the high degree of control for voters over which candidates are elected.
- Increased fairness, with some responses suggesting that Single Transferable Vote is fairer because outcomes reflect all votes cast.

- A greater degree of Member accountability and engagement with the electorate. Some responses suggested this could, in turn, result in better Members being elected.
- The simplicity of the Single Transferable Vote system, and people's ability to understand it more easily than other systems.
- The advantages of the Single Transferable Vote system for smaller political parties. Some responses suggested that candidates representing smaller political parties would find it easier to get elected under Single Transferable Vote than under the current electoral system.
- The potential of the system to support candidate and Member diversity.

64 per cent (150) of the 230 responses that expressed a preference for Flexible List Proportional Representation did not explain why. Reasons given by those who did provide explanations included:

- The proportionality of the Flexible List system.
- The degree to which outcomes under this system reflect all votes cast.
- Increased fairness.
- The ease with which the Flexible List Proportional Representation system can be understood.
- The advantages of Flexible List Proportional Representation for independent candidates and smaller political parties.

57 per cent (120) of the 210 responses that indicated a preference for the currently used Mixed Member Proportional System did not explain why. Reasons given by those who did provide explanations included:

- The proportionality of the Mixed Member Proportional system.
- The potential offered by this system for engagement between electors and their elected representatives. Some respondents noted that this system can provide smaller constituency sizes and that this would help electors to identify their Assembly Members and engage with them.
- People's understanding of and familiarity with the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in Wales.

- The likelihood that the Mixed Member Proportional System would increase the number of independent Members or smaller parties elected if additional Members were elected on an all-Wales basis.

13 per cent (170) of the 1,330 responses to either or both parts of question 3 did not express a preference for any of the three electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel. Of those 170 responses, 50 were in favour of a First-Past-The-Post System.

19 organisations responded to question 3, of which nine favoured the Single Transferrable Vote system, three preferred the Mixed Member Proportional system, one supported the Flexible List system, and six did not indicate a preference for any of the three systems proposed by the Expert Panel. Of those six, some highlighted important features of effective electoral systems, including proportionality, simplicity and support for diversity. One organisation, which did not express a preference for any of the Expert Panel's preferred systems, suggested an alternative form of Mixed Member Proportional system based on 40 constituency Assembly Members and 40 Members elected on the basis of a Closed List to represent the whole of Wales.

The Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board noted the principles upon which the Expert Panel's recommendations were based, and suggested that an additional feature of effective electoral systems should be considered:

The principles which have guided the work of the Expert Panel are sound. The principle of simplicity (for the electorate) is welcome and accords with our own objectives for promoting voter awareness, access and participation. However, there is no guiding principle for an elections system which is administratively manageable and one which can deliver safe and secure elections outcomes with public confidence. Whilst I am sure that this will have been in the mind of the Panel it would have been preferable to have had a specific guiding principle set out. This principle is fundamental to the work and standing of the elections professional community.

(Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board)

Some organisations highlighted the importance of introducing any changes to the electoral system sufficiently in advance of the next Assembly election to allow for preparation, planning and awareness raising:

...the potential impact on electors in Wales of a new electoral system could be significant and there may be a real risk of voter confusion,

particularly in relation to understanding of how to cast their vote. If the system is changed, the provision of an effective public awareness campaign in Wales ahead of an Assembly election would be required. The Assembly Commission should also consider how Returning Officers and their staff will be able to effectively plan for and resource any electoral change. Again we reiterate our recommendation that all legislation should be in place at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, Returning Officers or Electoral Registration Officers.

(Electoral Commission)

Diversity in the Assembly

We asked:

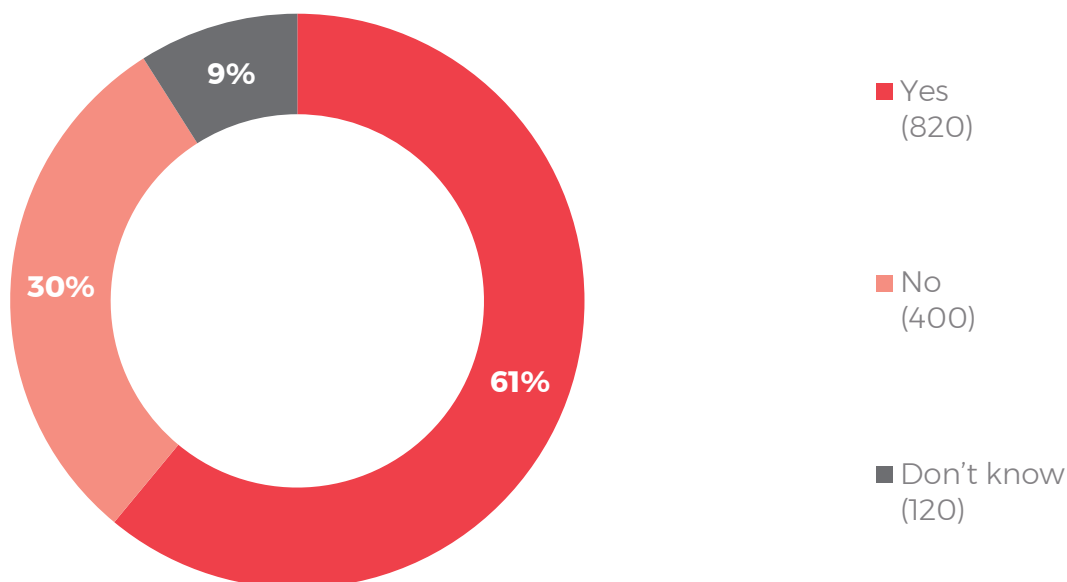
Question 4. Do you agree with the Expert Panel’s recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don’t know**

A total of 1,340 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,340 responses, 61 per cent (820) said they agreed with the Expert Panel’s recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales. 30 per cent (400) of responses disagreed with the recommendation and nine per cent (120) said ‘don’t know’.

Figure 5: Views on the Expert Panel’s recommendation that changes to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales



24 organisations responded to question 4. Of these 24, 19 said they agreed with the Expert Panel’s recommendation, one disagreed and four said ‘don’t know’.

We also asked:

Question 5. If you answered yes to question 4, do you believe that this should be achieved through legislation such as formal gender quotas, or by less formal means such as voluntary measures put in place by political parties? Please give reasons for your answer.

This question sought the views only of those who answered 'yes' to question 4 on how to encourage diversity in the Assembly. The analyses below do not take into account the views of those who answered 'no' or 'don't know' to question 4.

Of the 820 responses from those who answered 'yes' to question 4 (i.e. that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales), 47 per cent (380) said this should be achieved via voluntary measures. 26 per cent (210) said this should be achieved through more formal measures such as gender quotas.

Of the 47 per cent (380) who indicated support for voluntary measures to increase diversity, a majority did not propose specific voluntary measures. Suggestions from those that did included: all female shortlists; the removal by political parties of barriers for certain groups to stand for election; financial incentives; a requirement on political parties to report on and/or publish data on the characteristics of their candidates; and zipping.⁸ Some questioned how voluntary measures would apply to independent candidates, if at all.

Some responses to this question did not state a clear preference for voluntary or formal measures. Instead they provided comments relating to the promotion of diversity, with 24 per cent (190) of responses saying either that the best person should be elected regardless of gender and other characteristics, or that giving voters a good choice of candidates is more important than promoting diversity. Some said that restricting who can stand for election could affect the quality of Assembly Members elected.

⁸ The term 'zipping' in the context of elections refers to the practice within List Proportional Representation systems of ordering candidates on a list alternately according to their gender.

Other comments raised within responses to question 5 included:

- Voluntary measures should be introduced initially followed by a move towards formal gender quotas, or that formal gender quotas should be introduced only if voluntary measures proved ineffective.
- Quotas or voluntary measures should be used for a limited time only and they should be removed once a more diverse Assembly has been elected.
- Other characteristics should be promoted, not just gender.
- Gender is non-binary.⁹

A total of 21 organisations responded to question 5, 18 of which said ‘yes’ in response to question 4. A clear majority of those organisations were in favour of changes to the electoral system in order to encourage greater diversity in the Assembly. However, their responses to question 5 showed significantly differing views on how this should be achieved. Some favoured voluntary methods to encourage diversity:

Diversity of representation is a key issue for Liberal Democrats and we are committed to electing more representative and diverse representatives to all levels of government.[...]However, these measures should be enabling measures and should not be required of political parties. We would therefore support voluntary measures to be adopted by parties.

(Welsh Liberal Democrats)

⁹ Stonewall defines non-binary as ‘An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn’t sit comfortably with ‘man’ or ‘woman’. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.’

Gender quotas can be regarded as a good and well intentioned objective but we are not as yet convinced that a quota system is a better form of democracy than we already have in place. We do however encourage members of both genders to stand for election. We need a range of experience and views to ensure we have the best possible representation.[...]We sympathise with the aims and intentions of this suggestion but fear it might complicate Welsh politics to the detriment of the people of Wales.

(Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party)

Other organisations, including those that represent specific groups, argued that voluntary methods have not been effective and that more formal, legislative measures are therefore needed:

A commitment to equality was firmly established as a key principle when the Assembly was founded and in the early years that followed it became an international beacon of progress in establishing higher levels of representation for women in politics. On the evidence of the Assembly's early years, gender balance was a real benefit in terms of public and international perception, style and culture. However, equal representation achieved through voluntary action by political parties is fragile, and vulnerable to change within key parties that have adopted positive action measures in the past, and to the shifting balance of power between the parties. Voluntary measures put in place by some parties to promote equality have periodically fallen out of use and other parties have taken no steps to secure gender balance. This has resulted in a stalling of progress, particularly as the 'incumbency overhang' reduces over time. Without formal measures, the Assembly will face a constant process of 'boom and bust' in female representation. Formal measures such as all women shortlists are the only sustainable method of securing gender fairness in selection.

(Hansard Society)

WEN Wales strongly agrees that gender quotas should be enforced through legislation, and not just through voluntary measures. Wales and the National Assembly for Wales has historically achieved gender parity, with the 2003 election, becoming the first legislature to achieve a 50:50 balance. This was largely due to Welsh Labour's enduring success in National Assembly for Wales elections and the party's use of All Women Shortlists. However, more needs to be done to increase gender balance in candidates put forward by all political parties in

Wales, so that 50:50 representation is achieved consistently in the Assembly, regardless of the success of each individual party.
(Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales)

Job Sharing for Assembly Members

We asked:

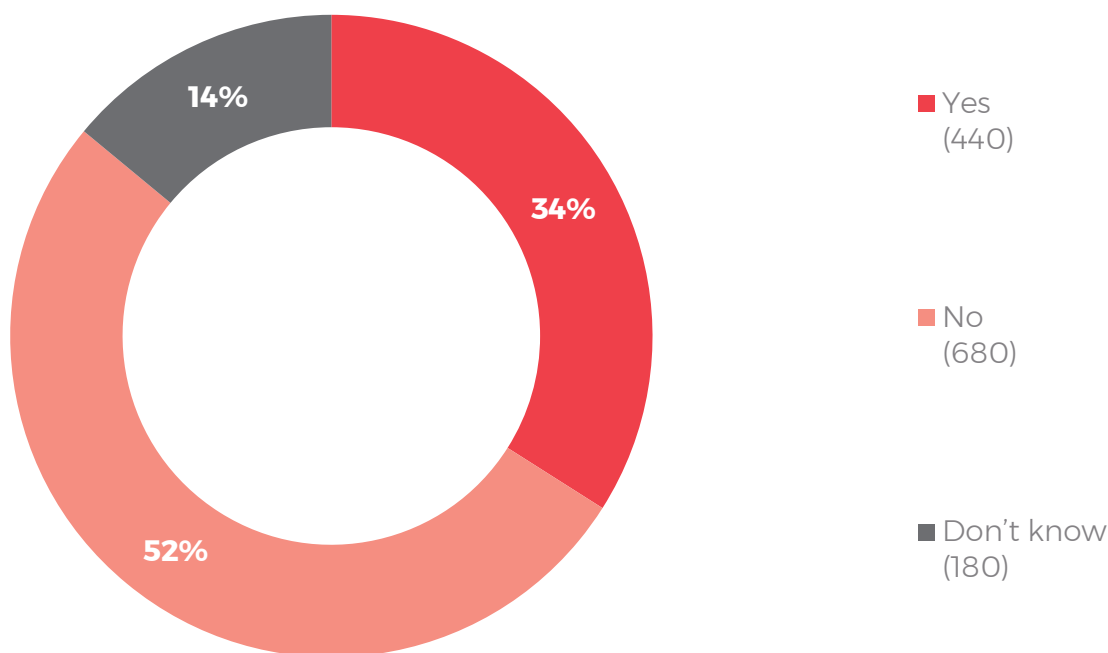
Question 6. Should people be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

A total of 1,300 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,300 responses, 34 per cent (440) agreed with the Expert Panel's recommendation that people should be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing. 52 per cent (680) of respondents disagreed and 14 per cent (180) said 'don't know'.

Figure 6: Views on whether people should be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing



The views of organisations that responded to this question differed from the views expressed by members of the public. Of the 22 organisations that responded to this question, 16 agreed that people should be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing, four disagreed and two said they did not know.

We also asked:

Question 7. What, if any, benefits or risks do you see resulting from allowing people to stand for election on the basis of job sharing arrangements?

860 responses were received to this question.

Of these 860 responses, 29 per cent (250) suggested that job sharing would have positive effects for the Assembly itself or more generally. Specific benefits mentioned included: enabling more people to stand for election to the Assembly, for example those who are not able to work full time; greater diversity within the Assembly; and a wider range of skills and experience.

More people (and more diverse groups of people) will be empowered to stand as candidates. If elected, this will widen the range of experience and knowledge in the Assembly, leading to better legislation.

(Member of the public)

However, responses also raised concerns about the practicalities of job sharing.

20 per cent (170) of responses to this question raised either concerns or questions about how the specific responsibilities of an Assembly Member would be split between job partners. Specific concerns included how voting in the Assembly Chamber would be shared between partners, especially where partners did not have a shared view on particular issues. Another common question raised was how job partners would be able to communicate and engage effectively with others.

The risks are that job sharing arrangements deteriorate during an elected term, resulting in arguments based on voting intentions (where an unforeseen difference emerges between job sharing AMs). This could be resolved by a pre-election agreement between the job sharers, however this would need to be comprehensive and enforced by an independent body.

(Member of the public)

19 per cent (160) of responses to this question stated that the role of an Assembly Member is too important to be shared. Some of these responses suggested that Assembly Members should not have other work commitments and presented this as an argument against job sharing.

It is a great commitment and privilege to become an AM, and from a practical point of view I do not think it would be possible to undertake this on a 'part-time' basis - constituents would expect both AMs to be available all the time.

(Member of the public)

17 per cent (140) of responses referred to representation. Some of these responses suggested that job sharing offered opportunities for improved representation, however many highlighted risks, including: the electorate being less familiar with two Members than one; difficulty knowing which job sharing partner to engage with on specific issues; and difficulty for the electorate to hold job partners to account.

Other issues raised in relation to job sharing included:

- Additional costs resulting from job sharing.
- Clarity or lack thereof for voters on the policy positions upon which job partners seek election.
- Differing political views leading to difficulties between job partners whilst in office.

26 organisations responded to this question. As noted above, organisations were more favourable towards job sharing within the Assembly than respondents generally. The issues raised by organisations generally reflected those raised by others, including references both to arguments of principle in favour of enabling job sharing and the practical challenges posed by it. However, unlike respondents in general, most organisations supported the introduction of job sharing despite the practical challenges:

The idea of job sharing has real potential for making the Assembly accessible to a more diverse range of members. There are risks associated with its implementation, however we believe it would be possible to manage these. For example, we would suggest a clear and formal arrangement for each party involved in the job sharing role on key issues, areas of work, working hours and encourage regular communication between the two individuals, as well as the support of their party and the Assembly Commission. Furthermore, the electorate should be aware of the arrangement at the time of election, with both candidate's names on the ballot paper and the principle of job sharing clear to them. If one of the representatives stands down the other

should too.

(Electoral Reform Society Cymru)

In principle we support the concept of job-sharing, not least because it works in other sectors and legislatures should not hold themselves apart from the culture and rules that they encourage other bodies to adopt. However, there are concerns and risks, in relation to constitutional propriety and representation that are important in the parliamentary context but which do not apply in other sectors. Any job share will require a protocol to deal with responsibilities and liabilities, to allow for either a clear split between the two individuals or the level at which responsibility is shared.[...]The challenges are not insurmountable but they do require detailed consideration.

(Hansard Society)

If the law was amended to allow candidates to stand for election under a job sharing arrangement, legislation relating to the form of nomination papers and the ballot paper would need to be amended, and a range of technical issues would also need to be addressed. This would include, for example, what would happen if one elected member in a job share partnership decided to stand down.

(Electoral Commission)

Assembly constituencies

We asked:

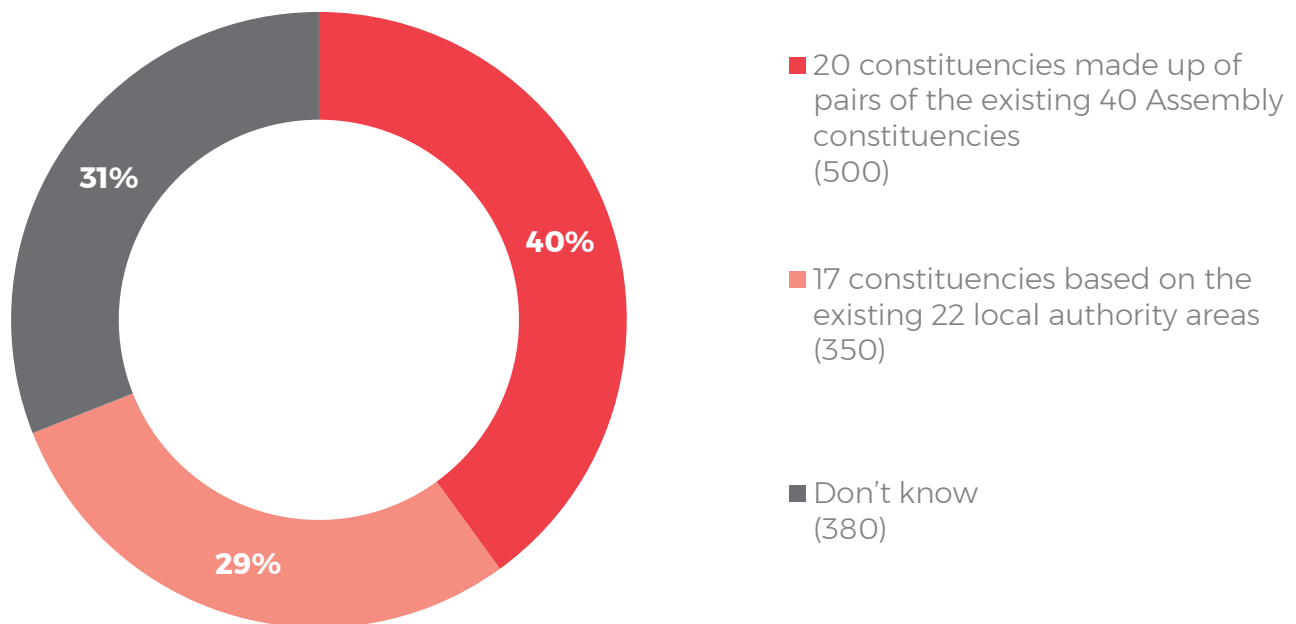
Question 8. If the Assembly adopted either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation for the election of Assembly Members, should Assembly Members be elected on the basis of:

- **20 constituencies based on pairing the existing 40 Assembly constituencies**
- **17 constituencies based on the existing 22 local authority areas**
- **Don't know**

1,240 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,240 responses, 40 per cent (500) said that if the Assembly adopted either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation for the election of Assembly Members, then Members should be elected on the basis of 20 constituencies made up of pairs of the existing 40 Assembly constituencies. 29 per cent (350) of responses preferred a model comprising 17 constituencies based on the existing 22 local authority areas and 31 per cent (380) said 'don't know'.

Figure 7: Views on the constituency model which should be used if the Assembly were to adopt either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation



18 organisations responded to this question. Five of them indicated a preference for 20 constituencies made up of the existing 40 Assembly constituencies. Four organisations favoured 17 constituencies based on local authority areas and nine answered ‘don’t know’. The Electoral Commission’s Wales Electoral Coordination Board noted some potential benefits of basing Assembly constituencies on local authority boundaries—synergy between Assembly Members and councils in terms of representation and effective joint working. However it also emphasised the potential complexity of basing Assembly boundaries on local authority boundaries at a time when the latter may themselves be subject to change as a result of the Welsh Government’s Green Paper on local government reform.¹⁰ The Electoral Commission’s Wales Electoral Coordination Board also noted that any Assembly constituency boundary review should be completed in good time prior to the next Assembly election.

¹⁰ Welsh Government, *Green Paper Consultation Document: Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People*, March 2018

We also asked:

Question 9. Would changes to the Assembly's electoral system result in i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

440 responses were received to the first part of this question on the costs of changes to the Assembly's electoral system.

Of those 440 responses to **question 9i**), 48 per cent (210) said that changes to the electoral system would result in costs. Specific costs referred to in the responses included:

- The costs of establishing a new electoral system and the costs of additional Assembly Members.
- The costs of measures to ensure understanding of a new electoral system, such as awareness raising and information sharing campaigns.
- Non-financial costs, such as the potential complexity of, and lack of familiarity with, a new electoral system.

17 per cent (80) of responses suggested that there might be an increase in taxes to pay for costs arising in relation to changes to the electoral system. Some responses considered the potential risk that these additional costs could reduce the money available for other priorities, including the delivery of public services.

A number of those who suggested there would be additional costs said those costs would be justifiable, although others considered the potential additional costs to be a reason why the reforms should not go ahead.

19 per cent (80) said there would be no additional costs as a result of changes to the Assembly's electoral system.

350 responses were received to **question 9ii**) on the benefits of changes to the Assembly's electoral system.

29 per cent (100) of responses stated there would be no benefit for them or their organisations. Some of these 100 responses highlighted the additional costs of changing the electoral system.

27 per cent (90) of responses referred to the effects changing the electoral system would have on representation and proportionality with a majority saying the effects would be positive.

15 per cent (50) of responses referred to the potential benefits of a change to the electoral system on democracy, including a stronger democracy.

3. Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

The consultation asked questions about who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, and whether or not the franchise for Assembly elections should be the same as the franchise for local government elections in Wales.

Key findings

- Of 1,570 responses to a question on the Assembly's franchise, 86 per cent (1,350) felt the same people should be allowed to vote in Assembly and local government elections in Wales.
- Of 1,530 responses to a question on what the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be, 59 per cent (910) thought the minimum voting age should be lowered from 18 to 16. Of 120 responses from people who identified themselves as under the age of 18, 81 per cent (100) said the minimum voting age should be lowered to 16.
- Of 1,480 responses to a question on voting rights for legal residents in Wales, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship, 66 per cent (980) felt that all legal residents should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, while 25 per cent (380) disagreed.
- Of 1,450 responses to a question on prisoner voting, 54 per cent (780) felt that prisoners released on home detention or temporary licence should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, while 34 per cent (490) did not agree.
- Of 1,440 responses to a different question on prisoner voting, 49 per cent (700) were in favour of prisoners being able to vote in an Assembly election if they were due to be released during the period for which

Members were being elected to serve, while 36 per cent (530) did not agree.¹¹

Summary of responses

We asked:

Question 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

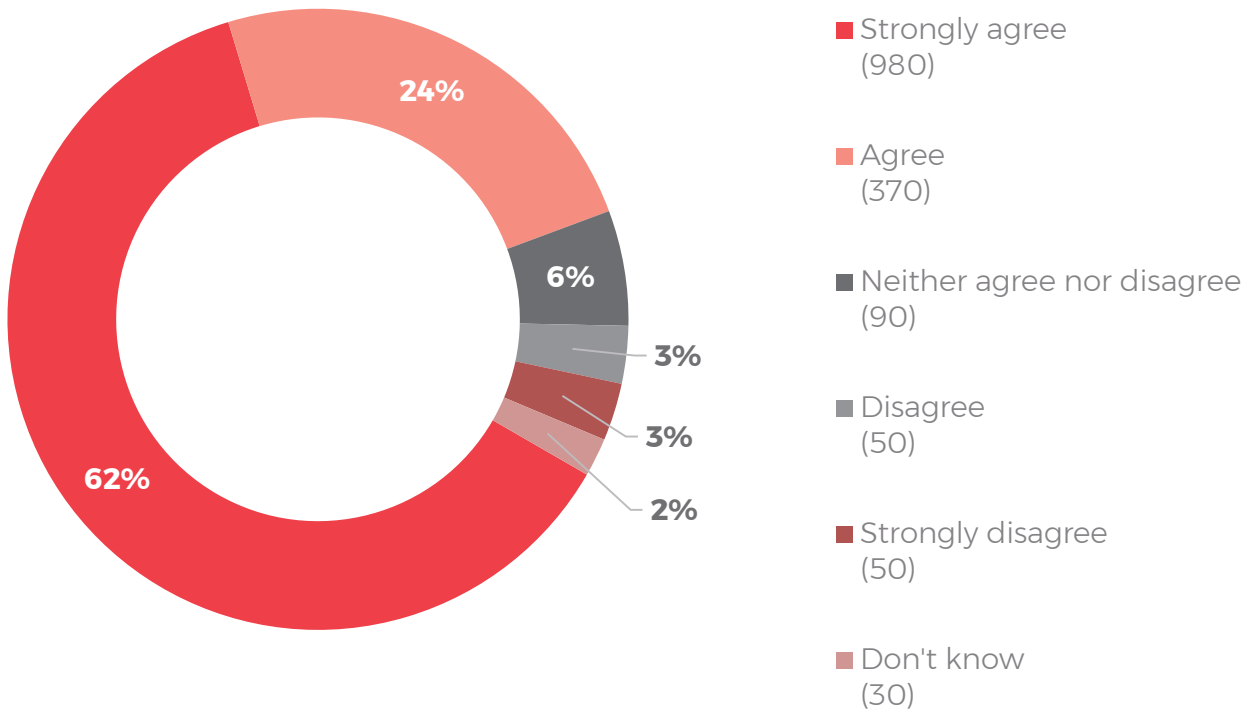
The same people should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections and in local government elections in Wales.

A total of 1,570 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,570 responses, 62 per cent (980) strongly agreed and a further 24 per cent (370) agreed with the statement in the question. Only six per cent (90) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

¹¹ For example, if the policy were implemented for the 2021 Assembly election, prisoners due for release between May 2021 and April 2026 would be eligible to vote.

Figure 8: Views on whether the same people should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections and in local government elections in Wales



19 organisations answered this question. Of those, 17 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in the question, including Electoral Reform Society Cymru, the Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales), Hansard Society, Children’s Commissioner for Wales and the Wales Green Party.

We asked:

Question 11. What implications would there be if there were differences between who could vote in Assembly elections and who could vote in local government elections in Wales?

A total of 930 responses were received to this question.

Of these 930 responses, 31 per cent (290) noted that differences between the franchises for Assembly and local government elections would affect people's democratic rights. Of these 290, many felt that the same people should be allowed to vote in different elections and that allowing individuals to vote in one election but not another would be discriminatory.

23 per cent (210) of responses to this question noted that a divergence in the franchises for both elections would lead to confusion, with most referring to confusion among voters especially those voting for the first time. Some said there would be confusion among political parties, the Civil Service or electoral administrators:

I believe that if there was a difference in the people entitled to vote in both local and assembly elections, then there would be an increased confusion with the election. The confusion will help breed political apathy which will ultimately result in a decreased turnout. If the voting age is to be lowered then this should be the case for all elections in Wales, excluding General Elections, where this is currently not possible.
(Member of the public)

The potential consequences of this confusion identified by respondents included:

- A disconnect with democratic processes and politics, particularly lower turnout at elections. A number of those who identified a risk of a lower turnout in elections also highlighted the importance of encouraging participation in democratic processes.
- Loss of credibility in democratic institutions.
- Increased costs for electoral administrators.
- Mistakes, including people trying to register to vote or trying to vote in elections in which they were not eligible to do so.

Eight per cent (70) of responses to this question referred to the effects of diverging franchises on people's feelings. Some respondents considered the effects on their own feelings and some expressed how others would be made to feel by differences in election franchises. The most common sentiments referred to were being discriminated against, unfairness and disillusionment:

I can vote in local and European elections but not national elections. I feel cheated as I pay tax like anyone else.

(Member of the public)

Other implications of diverging franchises identified by respondents included:

- The impact on representation, including the potential for less balanced representation which does not reflect the views of all parts of society due to some groups not being eligible to vote in certain elections.
- The impact upon the perceived status of different elections, with suggestions that the election with the most restricted franchise would be viewed as a higher status election.
- Greater divergence in policy on a local and national level.
- A less democratic society, where some individuals or groups are excluded from voting in certain elections.

Most of the 16 organisations that responded to this question were in favour of the same people being able to vote in Assembly and local government elections. Some referred to confusion they felt would result from divergent franchises:

If differences were introduced between the National Assembly for Wales and local government franchises this could cause voter confusion, as well as result in significant administrative challenges and require additional public awareness work.

(Electoral Commission)

The Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales) strongly agrees with this statement. Maintaining the same franchise arrangements for elections to the National Assembly for Wales and Local Government elections in Wales allows for administrative consistency and is in line with our key philosophy of maintaining the voter at the heart of the democratic process [...] If differing arrangements were introduced this could cause voter confusion and result in Electoral Registration Officers having to maintain multiple sets of Electoral Registers to cater for the

differences in franchise for Assembly and Local Government elections as well as UK Parliamentary elections.

(Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales))

When trying to persuade people to vote it could be seen as a negative to have to explain that they do not have the same rights in different elections. This is likely to undermine efforts to persuade young people in particular to vote.

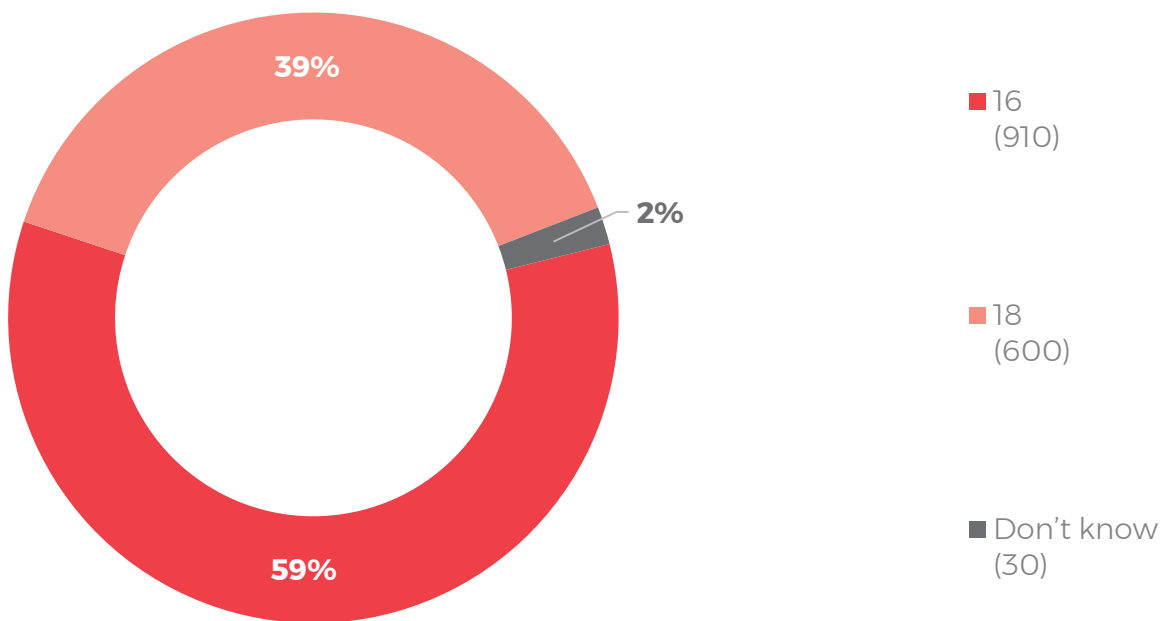
(Mudiad Meithrin)

Question 12. What should be the minimum voting age for Assembly elections?

- **16**
- **18**
- **Don't know**

A total of 1,530 responses to this question were received, including 120 from individuals who identified themselves as under the age of 18.¹²

Figure 9: Views on what the minimum voting age should be for Assembly elections



Of those 1,530 responses, 59 per cent (910) thought the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be lowered from 18 to 16. 39 per cent (600) said it should remain at 18. Two per cent (30) said 'don't know'.

Of the 1,530 responses, 120 were from people who identified themselves as under the age of 18. Of these 120 responses, 81 per cent (100) supported a lowering of the minimum voting age in Assembly elections from 18 to 16.¹³

¹² A total number of 1,530 responses received is shown here. The total of the number shown in Figure 9 is 1,540. See page 8 for an explanation of the difference in these figures.

¹³ 100 of 120 responses from under 18s is shown here as 81 per cent. 100 is actually 83 per cent of 120. The 81 per cent shown here is based on the actual numbers of responses whilst the 83 per cent is based on rounded numbers of responses. See page 8 for further information.

Of the 1,410 responses from people who did not identify themselves as being under the age of 18, 57 per cent (810) supported a lowering of the minimum voting age in Assembly elections from 18 to 16. 41 per cent (570) of the 1,410 responses thought that the voting age should be kept at 18.

Figure 10 Views on what the minimum voting age should be for Assembly elections (by age group)

Answer	Under 18s		Over 18s		Overall	
16	100	81%	810	57%	910	59%
18	20	18%	570	41%	590 ¹⁴	39%
Don't know	0 ¹⁵	1%	30	2%	30	2%

15 of the 20 organisations that responded to this question supported a reduction of the minimum voting age for Assembly elections to 16. They include the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, Maesteg Town Council, National Union of Students Wales, Hansard Society, Children's Commissioner for Wales, Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, Chwarae Teg, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Cymru, Welsh Liberal Democrats, Wales Green Party and the Morgan Academy. Four organisations indicated that the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be 18 and one said 'don't know'.

¹⁴ The actual number of under 18s and over 18s who wanted to retain the minimum voting age of 18 was 22 and 575 respectively. This makes a total of 597 which, when rounded, gives a figure of 600 as shown in Figure 9. However, when these numbers are rounded off as separate numbers, to 20 and 570 respectively, they make a total of 590 as shown here..

¹⁵ The number of respondents was less than five and has therefore been rounded to 0. The actual number still constitutes 1 per cent of the total number of under 18s that responded to this question.

What do young people think?

The Assembly's Education and Youth Engagement team ran workshops with young people to collect their views on the Expert Panel's recommendation that the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be reduced to 16.

26 sessions were delivered, involving 400 young people from all five Assembly electoral regions. The aim was to engage with as diverse a group of young people aged between 16 and 19 as possible, not only in terms of their background and where they lived, but also in terms of their levels of political interest and understanding. Participants were sourced through a variety of charities, youth groups, schools and colleges.

Sessions began with a short presentation on the Assembly's work.

Participants were then asked for their initial opinion on the proposal to lower the voting age to 16 before breaking up into smaller groups for facilitated discussions. Following those discussions, they were asked again for their opinion on the proposal to see if their views had changed.

The main findings were:

- There was no significant difference between participants' initial opinions and their opinions following the workshop discussions.
- Following the workshop discussions, over half of all participants said they were in favour of lowering the voting age to 16. Just over a third thought it should stay at 18.
- A slightly greater proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds than 18- and 19-year-olds were supportive of the proposal, although the difference in opinion between those two age groups was not significant.
- A large majority of participants who claimed to have significant interest in and knowledge of politics wanted the voting age to be lowered to 16. Those who identified themselves as having a low level of interest in and knowledge of politics were the least supportive of the proposals, with over half of these participants feeling that the voting age should remain at 18.

There were three issues which were raised by young people during the facilitated discussions during all of the 26 sessions:

Decisions that are made as a result of elections have an impact on young people (raised by 90 young people)

It's frustrating watching the country's politics unfold without having any say on it.

(16-year-old, Neath Port Talbot)

I think it should be lowered because we are the generation that will be most affected by the decisions and implications. They'll have a positive influence on this.

(16-year-old, Swansea)

16-year-olds lack the maturity and experience needed to vote (raised by 80 young people)

18 year olds should vote because they're more responsible.

(young person, Anglesey)¹⁶

Young people are not well enough informed about how the political process works, and more needs to be done to teach young people in school (raised by 40 young people)

We need more education about voting – educate young people about politics

(young person, Swansea)

I think the voting age should be lowered only if the standard of education about politics is improved. I think it should be taught in more detail from a younger age and more regularly.

(young person, Powys)

¹⁶ Participants in the workshops were asked to provide their age but not all participants did. A quote attributed here to a 'young person' was provided by someone who did not reveal their age. All participants were aged between 16-19.

Other issues frequently raised during the facilitated discussions included:

- At 16, young people already have similar responsibilities to 18-year-olds, including paying taxes.

I feel very strongly about this matter as you can do a lot of things at 16 – join the army, get married, have kids and drive at 17 but can't vote
(16 year old, Aberdare)

- 16- and 17-year-olds are more likely to be influenced by their parents, friends, social media and 'fake news'.

The media has a big impact on teenage opinions e.g. Twitter.
(17-year-old, Mold)

16 year olds aren't taught how to vote so they are more likely to be influenced by their parents.
(young person, Newport)

- Maturity and intelligence are not defined by age.

I often feel powerless and want to be more involved, but can't vote. I also feel that there are more mature 16 year olds than adults.
(17-year-old, Flintshire)

- Allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to vote would result in those people being more likely to vote when they are older.

Lowering the age would encourage more people to learn about politics and take part, because we'd have the option to vote. Our political awareness can be improved!
(17-year-old, Maesteg)

We asked:

Question 13. Would reducing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections result in: i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation?

450 responses were received to **question 13i)** about the costs of lowering the minimum voting age.

Of these 450 responses, 43 per cent (190) said there would be little or no cost for them or their organisations.

12 per cent (50) of responses to this question referred to the lack of preparedness of under 18s to vote in elections, suggesting that under 18s:

- Are not mentally ready to vote.
- Lack sufficient life experience to vote.
- Have insufficient knowledge to vote.
- Are too impressionable or easily persuaded.

Some responses suggested that the costs of lowering the minimum voting age would include a lower turnout rate at elections and poorer political decision-making.

10 per cent (50) of responses to this question said that lowering the minimum voting age would lead to greater administrative costs – including the cost of preparing additional documents such as ballot papers – and the cost of counting more votes. A small number of these responses noted that any additional costs would be outweighed by the benefits of lowering the minimum voting age:

The reduction in the minimum voting age for Assembly elections would inevitably result in increased administrative costs particularly for Electoral Registration Officers required to collect the required data. As such we would seek a guarantee from Welsh Government and the Assembly to fully fund any new burden/initiative resulting from legislative reforms, and to fully engage with the electoral community in relation to practically implementing, developing and planning any new mechanisms or processes including the drafting of legislation. (Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales))

Some other responses to this question included:

- There would be additional costs for taxpayers.
- The citizenship and political education that would need to accompany a lowering of the minimum voting age would result in costs.

The Electoral Commission noted some specific financial costs that would arise if the minimum voting age for Assembly elections was lowered to 16:

...the cost implications of a reduction in the minimum voting age for Assembly elections would be wide ranging. As a guide the following outlines the costs associated with the additional work relating to the enfranchisement of 16/17 year olds in Scotland. From the financial memorandum published with the Scottish Elections (Reduction of voting age) Bill 2015, the total of the costs falling on the Scottish Government was expected to be within the range of £1,115,000 to £1,365,000, across the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years. The Commission actually spent £55,000 on user testing and development and design of the forms and £124k carrying out public awareness activity ahead of the referendum.

(Electoral Commission)

480 responses were received to **question 13ii)** about the benefits of lowering the minimum voting age.

Of these 480 responses, 31 per cent (150) suggested that lowering the minimum voting age for Assembly elections would have little or no benefit for them or their organisations.

18 per cent (90) of responses to this question noted that lowering the minimum voting age to 16 would benefit political engagement and participation.

Other benefits identified in responses included:

- Improved representation.
- Better democracy.
- Higher turnout at elections, with some noting that young people given the vote would continue voting into later life.

- Better informed voters resulting from the political and citizenship education which would accompany a lowering of the minimum voting age.
- Policies would be more focused on young people.
- Empowering young people and making them feel that their voices are being heard.

The benefits would bring young people into the political system at a time of their lives when they have enthusiasm and drive. This should be stimulated through their education by schools, parents and all who have access to young people development.

(Member of the public)

As a parent I can see enormous value of my child being able to vote while she is still living with us before going to university. This would help make voting and political participation a habit.

(Member of the public)

The more younger people that are involved in their future the better it will be for all of us.

(Member of the public)

We asked:

Question 14. Are there any other issues, benefits or risks you would like us to consider in relation to changing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer.

820 responses were received to this question.

Of these 820 responses, 22 per cent (180) referred to citizenship or political education. The vast majority of these supported the provision of citizenship or political education, with many saying that lowering the minimum voting age should depend on the provision of such education. Some went as far as to say this education should be compulsory in schools. According to respondents, the benefits of citizenship or political education include ensuring that young voters are informed and helping to address apathy towards politics.

Please consider introducing votes at 16 as part of a reform of education policy so that from the start of formal education in primary school, pupils are taught about what elections are, how they work,

what they are used for and government in general.

(Member of the public)

A small number of responses questioned whether this education would be delivered in a politically impartial way.

19 per cent (160) of responses to this question referred to the preparedness of 16- and 17-year-olds to vote. Most of these 160 did not support a lowering of the minimum voting age, with some highlighting a perceived inconsistency in the Assembly lowering the minimum voting age whilst having recently raised the age threshold for certain other activities, including the use of sunbeds and having intimate body piercings. A small number noted that 16- and 17-year-olds should be allowed to vote on the basis that they are eligible to pay tax, join the army and undertake other activities for which the age threshold is 16 or 17.

Some of these 160 responses noted concern about the ease with which the political views of 16- and 17-year-olds would be influenced, should they be given the vote, with particular reference to the influence of social media.

18 per cent (150) of responses to this question referred to the maturity of 16- and 17-year-olds. The majority of these argued against lowering the minimum voting age due to a lack of maturity at this age.

20 organisations responded to question 14, most of which were in favour of reducing the minimum voting age to 16, including the Electoral Reform Society Cymru, National Union of Students Wales, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, Hansard Society and the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales. Some organisations in favour of lowering the minimum voting age referred to the need for consistency in the minimum voting age for different elections. The Children's Commissioner for Wales highlighted the right of children to have their voices heard:

My response is guided by the principles and obligations laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 of the Convention guarantees the right of every child to have their views heard, taken into account and given due weight in all matters that concern them. It goes without saying that whilst currently being denied the right to vote, governments have far reaching powers that affect almost every aspect of children and young people's day-to-day lives. Therefore, I would welcome and fully support proposals to extend the age of enfranchisement to include 16 and 17 year olds in

Wales.

(Children's Commissioner for Wales)

Two organisations noted their opposition to a lowering of the voting age: The Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party and Flintshire 50+ Action Group.

The Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board stated that any change to the franchise must be legislated for in good time prior to the next Assembly election to allow for electoral registration and elections planning. It advised that that any such legislation should be passed by 2020.

We asked:

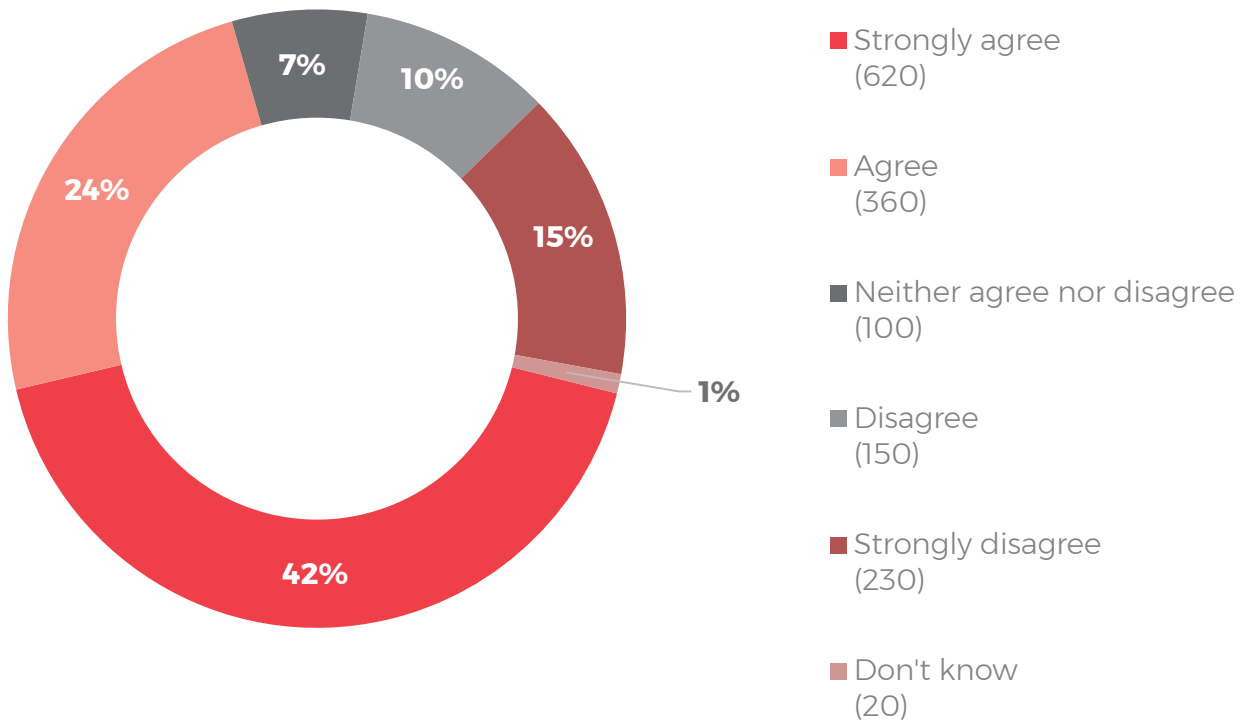
Question 15. To what extent do you agree or disagree or disagree with the following statement?

All legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship.

1,480 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,480 responses, 66 per cent (980) felt that all legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship (42 per cent (620) strongly agreed and 24 per cent (360) agreed). 25 per cent (380) disagreed (10 per cent (150) disagreed and 15 per cent (230) strongly disagreed).

Figure 11: Views on whether all legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship



We also asked:

Question 16. Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of non-UK nationals legally resident in Wales to vote in Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer.

620 responses were received to this question.

Of those 620 responses, 27 per cent (160) restated support for allowing legal residents to vote as expressed in their responses to question 15. Reasons given for supporting this proposal included: that the vote should be extended to all those affected by the Assembly’s decisions which, according to some responses, includes anyone resident in Wales; and that it would encourage integration by making immigrants feel part of Welsh life. Some responses suggested there should be qualifications on the right of non-UK citizens to vote, such as paying taxes.

16 per cent (100) of responses to this question felt that only UK citizens should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections. Among the reasons given to support this view were:

- Voting in other countries is restricted to citizens of those countries.

- Non-UK nationals should not be allowed to affect UK or Welsh laws.
- Those resident in the UK who have not become citizens are not fully committed to the UK and should therefore not have a say in elections.

Some responses suggested that only UK citizens resident in Wales or who have their main residence in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections.

13 per cent (80) of responses referred specifically to a minimum period of residence as a qualification for voting in Assembly elections. Some wanted to see a minimum period of residence within the UK whilst others proposed a minimum period of residence within Wales. The minimum periods of residence suggested ranged from one to 10 years.

Other issues raised in response to this question included whether or not:

- Students should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections. Some responses were in favour of this while others were opposed.
- UK citizens living abroad should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections. Some responses were in favour of this while others were opposed.

13 organisations responded to this question, although most did not express strong views either way. Those that did express a view were in favour of extending the vote to all legal residents. In particular, ensuring the continuation of the right of citizens of the European Union to vote in Assembly elections post-Brexit was highlighted as an issue. Organisations involved in the administration of elections suggested there should be consistency in the franchises for different elections, and that any changes to the Assembly franchise should be made in good time in advance of the next election:

People living in Wales who come from outside the UK have an important contribution to make in our communities. They often work in our institutions, pay taxes towards our services and raise children here who are Welsh citizens. It is important that they are represented fairly in the democratic system.

(Mudiad Meithrin)

At a time where EU nationals feel like pawns in the Brexit negotiations, it is important that Wales maintains its ties to Europe and enshrines the rights of legal residents in Welsh policies and legislations. Beyond the scope of Brexit, it is important that the legal residents of Wales, who may have previously been residents of countries either within or

outside of the EU, feel represented and incorporated into Welsh political and public life. It is therefore important that all legal residents of Wales have the right to have their voices heard and an equal say in political affairs, like all other citizens of Wales.

(Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales)

We asked:

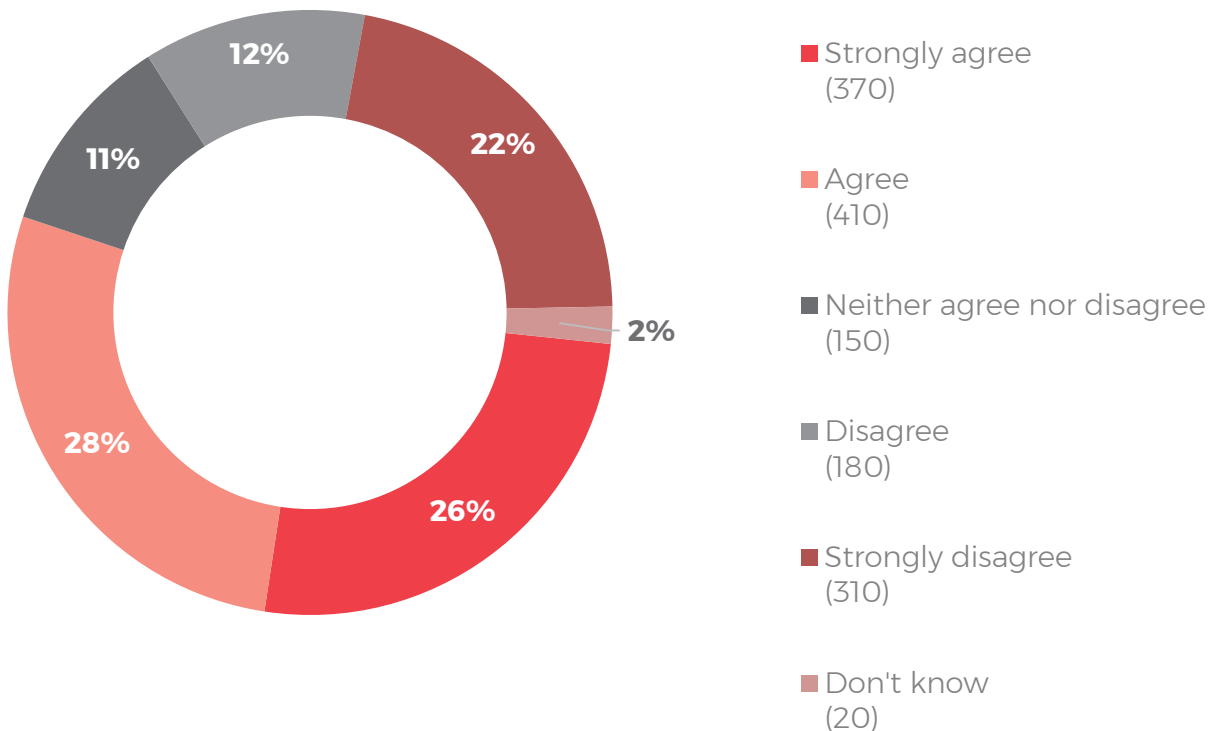
Question 17i. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the UK Government’s intention for UK elections.

1,450 responses were received to this question.

Of these 1,450 responses, 54 per cent (780) felt that prisoners released on home detention or temporary licence should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections (26 per cent (370) strongly agreed and 28 per cent (410) agreed), whilst 34 per cent (490) did not agree (12 per cent (180) disagreed and 22 per cent (310) strongly disagreed).

Figure 12: Views on whether prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections



We also asked:

Question 17ii. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Prisoners whose due release date falls before the end of the term of the Assembly for which they are voting should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the Welsh Government's intention for local government elections in Wales.

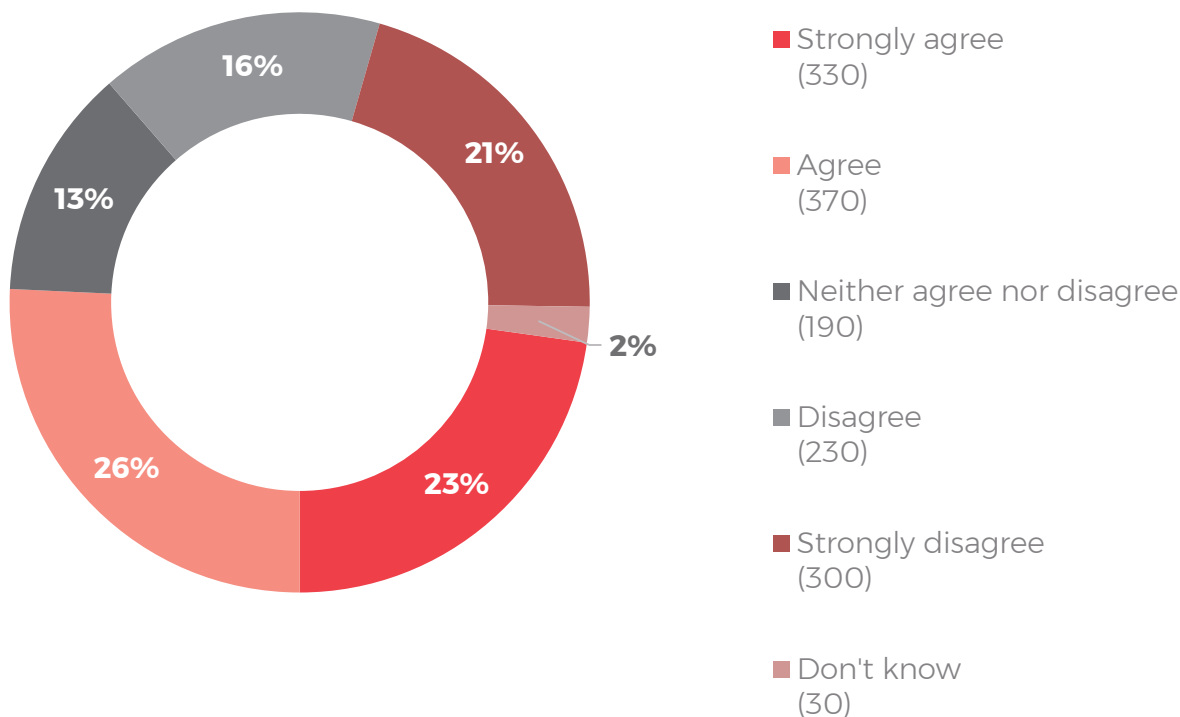
1,440 responses were received to this question.

Of those 1,440 responses, 49 per cent (700) were in favour of prisoners being able to vote in an Assembly election if they were due to be released during the period for which Members were being elected to serve¹⁷ (23 per cent (330) strongly agreed and 26 per cent (370) agreed), while 36 per cent¹⁸ (530) did not agree (16 per cent (230) disagreed and 21 per cent (300) strongly disagreed).

¹⁷ For example, if the policy were implemented for the 2021 Assembly election, prisoners due for release between May 2021 and April 2026 would be eligible to vote.

¹⁸ This combined total of 36 per cent is based on the combined actual numbers of responses rounded off to the nearest complete one per cent. The 16 per cent who disagreed and 21 per cent who strongly disagreed are based separately on the actual numbers of responses who gave those responses, not combined, and rounded off to the nearest complete one per cent.

Figure 13: Views on whether prisoners whose due release date falls before the end of the term of the Assembly for which they are voting should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections



We asked:

Question 18. Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of prisoners to vote in Assembly elections? Please give reasons for your answer.

510 responses were received to this question.

Despite the support for allowing some prisoners to vote expressed in response to questions 17i) and 17ii), the most common single issue raised in response to this question was that prisoners should not be allowed to vote. 28 per cent (140) of responses mentioned this. Reasons given to support this view included:

- A loss of rights is part of prisoners' punishment, which should include the right to vote.
- Prisoners should not have a say in who governs the country and makes laws.

10 per cent (50) of responses to this question noted that prisoners should be allowed to vote only once they have left prison:

Those who have committed crimes sufficiently serious to warrant imprisonment should not have the right to vote until they have fully paid their debt to society.

(Member of the public)

18 per cent (90) of responses said all prisoners should be allowed to vote. Reasons given to support this view included:

- Other countries allow prisoners to vote.
- Prisoners in Wales are affected by decisions made by the Assembly.
- Prisoners will feel more part of society if they are allowed to vote.

Again, I agree with both of these propositions as a start, but believe they should go further - prisoners should not be disenfranchised because of their previous actions - they are still residents of the country, and should not have their fundamental human rights taken away because they are currently in prison

(Member of the public)

12 per cent (60) of responses referred to the rehabilitation of prisoners, with many arguing that an entitlement to vote would help their reintegration into society. Some suggested that citizenship or political education should be provided to prisoners.

Other issues raised in response to this question included:

- The constituency in which prisoners should be registered to vote (i.e. the constituency in which they are imprisoned or within which they normally reside). Respondents who raised this issue showed a clear preference for prisoners voting in the constituency within which they normally reside.
- The administrative arrangements which would be required to allow prisoners to vote.

- The need to take account of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.¹⁹

12 organisations responded to this question. The Electoral Reform Society Cymru highlighted that to allow prisoners in Wales to vote could have the effect of enfranchising male prisoners but not female prisoners as there are no women's prisons in Wales. Organisations also suggested that:

- Allowing prisoners to vote would carry with it potentially significant additional administrative burden and costs.
- There should be consistency across the franchises for different elections.

The Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board emphasised the need for careful planning and additional resources if prisoners were to be allowed to vote in Assembly elections:

Any system for the participation of detained offenders will need to be practicable and be planned closely in partnership with Government bodies responsible for the prisons and associated services and estate. Such a system could be resource intensive for elections administrators and additional resources would be required for set-up and administration

(Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board)

¹⁹ A series of rulings by the European Court of Human Rights have found that a blanket ban against prisoner voting contravenes Article 3 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

4. Who should be able to be an Assembly Member?

The consultation asked a question on the rules about disqualification from membership of the Assembly.

Key findings

- Of the 510 responses to a question on disqualification from membership of the Assembly, 34 per cent (180) agreed that legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements should include provision to implement the recommendations of the Fourth Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to disqualification from being an Assembly Member. 13 per cent (70) of responses disagreed.
- The other responses to this question did not firmly agree or disagree with the question. Rather, they either commented on the Committee's recommendations, answered 'don't know' or said that they had not understood the question.

Summary of responses

We asked:

Question 19. Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the recommendations of the Fourth Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to disqualification from being an Assembly Member? Are there any other changes which should be made to the disqualification arrangements? Please give reasons for your answer.

The Committee's recommendations were as follows:

- The Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act") should be amended so that for most of the disqualifying offices, a person is only ineligible to be an Assembly Member if they hold the relevant role at the point at which they take the oath or affirmation of allegiance after they are elected. This means that people would not have to resign disqualifying offices in order to stand for election as a Member, therefore removing a significant barrier to standing for election. Some

disqualifying offices where even being a candidate would give rise to a conflict of interest, for example Electoral Returning Officers, or members of the Electoral Commission, would continue to take effect at the point of nomination.

- As a consequence, the requirement for people to declare that they do not hold a disqualifying office before accepting nomination as a candidate should be removed from the National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007. The requirement would be unnecessary as most disqualifications would take effect at the point of taking the oath or affirmation of allegiance.
- The list of disqualifying offices should be made clearer, with the relevant offices being fully described in Welsh legislation, rather than by way of reference to other legislation.
- Section 16(1) of the 2006 Act should be amended to remove reference to the Auditor General for Wales and the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, which should, instead be listed with other, similar offices in the relevant Disqualification Orders.
- Section 16(4) of the 2006 Act should be amended to clarify that anyone holding office as a lord lieutenant, lieutenant or high sheriff is disqualified from being an Assembly Member anywhere in Wales, rather than only in the constituencies or regions in which they hold their office.
- On the basis of there being a conflict of interest in serving in two legislatures which scrutinise legislation, the practice of standing as an Assembly Member and a member of the House of Lords should be prohibited, but that the prohibition should not apply to members of the House of Lords who were currently serving as Assembly Members.²⁰

510 responses were received to this question.

Of those 510 responses, 34 per cent (180) agreed that the Committee's recommendations should be implemented within legislation, with many responses suggesting it made sense for these provisions to be put in place. 20 of those 180 responses added that candidates should only have to resign from

²⁰ National Assembly for Wales Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, *Inquiry into disqualification from membership of the National Assembly for Wales*, July 2014

disqualifying jobs or offices if elected, instead of having to do so in order to stand for election. A small number of responses also stated that the changes would encourage greater participation in elections:

Yes it makes good sense to alter the arrangements as suggested to allow people to hold a currently disqualified office whilst they seek to be elected but stand down only if they are elected
(Member of the public)

13 per cent (70) of the responses did not agree with the recommendations made by the Committee or felt they should not be implemented in legislation. The majority of these responses did not provide reasons to support their views. The most commonly cited reason for disagreeing with the recommendations was that existing arrangements are adequate.

The other responses to this question did not firmly agree or disagree with the question. Rather they either commented on the Committee's recommendations, answered 'don't know' or said that they had not understood the question.

The issue most commonly raised among those that did not firmly agree or disagree with legislating to implement the Committee's recommendations was that any person with a criminal record should be disqualified from membership of the Assembly. There was a variation in views on the crimes that should disqualify a person from standing for election, with some saying any sort of criminal conviction should result in disqualification. Others felt there should be a time limit on the disqualification period, for example, only convictions within the last five years should count as a disqualification.²¹

Other comments about the Committee's recommendations included: proposing additional disqualifications; highlighting issues in relation to the recommendations; or stating there should be no restrictions on being able to stand for election. Some responses suggested that candidates who do not live in Wales should be disqualified.

²¹ Some criminal offenders are already disqualified from membership of the Assembly under existing law. The Representation of the People Act 1981 disqualifies some offenders from membership of the House of Commons. That disqualification is made applicable to membership of the Assembly by section 16 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

A small number of responses agreed that there is a conflict in holding two elected offices at the same time, with some stating clearly that individuals should only hold one elected post at any one time. Some responses suggested additional disqualifications from membership of the Assembly, including serving as a local councillor, membership of the House of Lords, membership of the House of Commons or membership of the European Parliament.²² Some additional disqualifying criteria were also suggested, such as a lack of experience outside of politics.

20 responses to this question were received from organisations. Six organisations were in favour and one against, with the rest commenting on the question without expressing a clear view in favour or against the implementation of the recommendations in legislation.

Maesteg Town Council stated that a person should be a UK national living in Wales for a minimum of two years in order to serve in the Assembly.

The Auditor General for Wales supported the Committee's view that most disqualifications should take effect following election to the Assembly, although he also noted a significant number of public offices or appointments that he considered should continue to disqualify at the point of candidature:

In many cases, I think it is appropriate for a person to only be ineligible to be an Assembly Member if they hold the relevant role at the point that they take the oath/affirmation of allegiance after election. For example, it is hard to see how being a member of Meat Promotion Wales is incompatible with being a candidate for the Assembly. In such cases, the change would remove an unnecessary obstacle to participation. I do, however, think that there is a significant number of persons whose candidature alone is not compatible with their roles in public administration.

(Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales)

The Electoral Commission called for a standard approach to the disqualification of elected members across all of the UK.

Both the Welsh Liberal Democrats and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers were in favour of implementing the Committee's

²² Members of the UK Parliament are disqualified from Membership of the Assembly by virtue of the Wales Act 2014.

recommendations and stated that this could remove barriers for more people to become involved in politics.

Geldards LLP commented that members of the House of Lords should not be completely disqualified from serving in the Assembly, but suggested that such individuals should be required to take a formal leave of absence from the House of Lords in order to be able to serve in the Assembly. Such an arrangement would reflect the approach taken in relation to Supreme Court Judges who are also members of the House of Lords.

Feedback that respondents found the background information in the online surveys inadequate was received at an early stage during the consultation period—in response to this feedback additional information about the Committee’s recommendations was added. Nevertheless, six per cent (30) of the responses to this question noted difficulty understanding the question itself. Some responses pointed to a lack of background information and others stated that they were not aware of the Committee’s recommendations.

5. Should the law relating to electoral administration be rationalised?

The consultation asked whether changes to the law on elections proposed by some organisations should be reflected within legislation on Assembly elections.

Key findings

- Of 750 responses to a question relating to expenditure limits in Assembly elections, 71 per cent (530) felt the Assembly should legislate to ensure costs relating to translation between Welsh and English do not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates, as recommended by the Electoral Commission. 21 per cent (150) of responses disagreed.
- Of 700 responses to a separate question on expenditure limits in Assembly elections, 86 per cent (600) felt the Assembly should legislate to ensure costs arising in relation to an individual's disability do not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates, as recommended by the Electoral Commission. Eight per cent (60) of responses disagreed.
- Of 420 responses to a question on rationalising the law relating to the conduct and administration of elections, 57 per cent (240) considered that the Assembly should legislate to implement recommendations made by the Law Commission. Four per cent (10) disagreed.

Summary of responses

We asked:

Question 20i. Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the Electoral Commission's recommendations that costs relating to translation between Welsh and English should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners? Please give reasons for your answers.

In its report on the 2016 Assembly election, the Electoral Commission noted that the rules for the treatment of spending by non-party campaigners, as set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, had been updated to exempt costs arising in relation to translation between Welsh and English. It recommended that similar exemptions should be introduced in relation to such spending by political parties and candidates.²³

750 responses were received to this question.

Of those 750 responses, 71 per cent (530) agreed that the cost of translation between the Welsh and English languages should not count towards the expenditure costs of parties and candidates. Of these, 11 per cent (60) commented that Wales is a bilingual nation or country and that materials should therefore be available in both languages.

Other comments included:

- This change would increase usage of the Welsh language or help to promote the Welsh language.
- It is a legal right or a matter of equality to receive materials in the Welsh language.
- The need for transparency on translation costs and for checks to be put in place if the proposed change was made.
- The current rules could prevent smaller parties or individuals from providing Welsh language materials.
- The need to consider the costs of translation between other languages.

A number of responses stated that translation costs should not be counted within expenditure limits but that translation costs should be constrained to ensure accountability. Some responses also stated that there needed to be a simpler approach to spending limits or that rules should be applied consistently.

²³ Electoral Commission, *The National Assembly for Wales General Election: report on the administration of the 2016 elections to the National Assembly for Wales*, September 2016

21 per cent (150) of responses disagreed that translation costs should not be counted within expenditure limits. Comments provided to support this view included:

- Translation costs should be included within expenditure limits for transparency purposes.
- Translation costs are a waste of money that could be better spent elsewhere.
- Everyone speaks English and there is no need for translation.
- Parties should fund translation costs.

A total of 19 responses were received from organisations. Three of those organisations did not address the question directly. 14 organisations were in favour of implementing the recommendation in legislation. Two organisations commented on the recommendation but gave no view one way or the other on whether it should be included in legislation.

The Auditor General for Wales stated that the inclusion of translation costs within expenditure limits is not an incentive to provide bilingual materials and is not conducive to promoting the Welsh language.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers stated that discounting translation costs would remove a potentially discriminatory barrier and that it would welcome the change.

We asked:

Question 20ii. Should legislation to reform the Assembly’s electoral arrangements include provision to implement the Electoral Commission’s recommendations that costs relating to an individual’s disability should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners?

The Electoral Commission, in its report on the 2016 Assembly election, noted that the rules for the treatment of spending by non-party campaigners, as set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, had been updated to exempt reasonable costs which could be attributed to an individual’s disability. It

recommended that similar exemptions should be introduced in relation to such spending by political parties and candidates.²⁴

700 responses were received to this question.

Of those 700 responses, 86 per cent (600) agreed that costs relating to an individual's disability should not count towards expenditure costs. Of these, 10 per cent (60) commented that disability related costs should not count towards expenditure limits for equality purposes and/or that the inclusion of these costs within expenditure limits could be considered discriminatory. Nine per cent (50) stated that excluding disability related costs from expenditure limits would improve accessibility for disabled people and increase diversity in political life.

Some responses agreed that disability-related costs should be exempt from expenditure limits but suggested there should be limitations on those costs or that they should be monitored for transparency purposes.

One respondent who identified themselves as disabled said:

I know that sometimes doing certain things can be more expensive for someone with special needs than for an able-bodied person so this needs to be taken into account so that all parties are on a level playing field.

(Member of the public)

Eight per cent (60) of responses disagreed, stating that costs relating to an individual's disability should count towards expenditure limits. The most common reason given to support this view was that all costs should be included within expenditure limits for transparency purposes.

A total of 19 responses to this question were received from organisations. Two organisations did not directly address the question or express a view on it. All other organisations that responded to this question agreed that disability related costs should not count towards expenditure limits.

WEN Wales strongly supports this recommendation, as it would remove a significant barrier to candidates who incur additional costs due to an individual's disability from running. All barriers that

²⁴ Electoral Commission, *The National Assembly for Wales General Election: report on the administration of the 2016 elections to the National Assembly for Wales*, September 2016

disadvantage underrepresented candidates from running for political office should be removed, wherever possible, to actively encourage a greater diversity amongst elected officials such as Assembly Members.
(Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales)

We asked:

Question 20iii. Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the Law Commissions' recommendations in relation to the conduct and administration of elections?

As part of its Eleventh Programme of Law Reform, the Law Commissions of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland conducted a joint electoral law reform project. The project's interim report, published in February 2016, made recommendations to rationalise the current laws relating to elections into a single, consistent legislative framework, which would provide consistency across different elections (subject to differentiation due to the voting system or other justifiable principle or policy).²⁵ Its recommendations covered issues including the manner of voting, electoral offences, and the regulation of campaign expenditure. Legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements could provide an opportunity to include an enabling power for the Welsh Government to implement such recommendations made by the Law Commission as the Assembly would consider to be relevant and desirable in relation to Assembly elections.

420 responses were received to this question.

57 per cent (240) of responses said legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements should include provision to implement the Law Commissions' recommendations. The most common reasons given for this were that the recommendations would help to rationalise/simplify electoral processes and that respondents trusted the Law Commission experts that the recommended changes are required. Some responses noted that if the recommendations led to greater fairness in elections they should be supported.

Four per cent (10) of responses disagreed that legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements should include provision to implement the Law Commissions' recommendations.

²⁵ Law Commissions, *Electoral Law: an interim report*, 4 February 2016

15 per cent (60) of responses either stated that further consideration of the recommendations was required before responding to the question or that they had not understood the question. A further nine per cent (40) said 'don't know' in response to this question.

15 responses were received from organisations. Five of those responses were in favour of legislating to implement the Law Commission's recommendations with one against. The other organisations that responded to this question did not express a firm view in favour or against legislating to implement the recommendations.

6. Should the Assembly have flexibility to decide on its internal arrangements?

The consultation sought views on the appropriate degree of flexibility for the Assembly to decide on its own internal arrangements and working practices.

Key findings

- Of 770 responses to a question relating to the Assembly's internal arrangements, 60 per cent (460) supported proposed reforms to provide greater flexibility for the Assembly to determine its own ways of working, with 30 per cent (240) opposed.

Summary of responses

We asked:

Question 21. Should the Government of Wales Act 2006 be amended as set out in this consultation document, in order to give the Assembly greater flexibility to determine its own working practices and arrangements through its internal procedures rather than in legislation?

The specific proposals consulted on were:

- To introduce flexibility over the number of Deputy Presiding Officers the Assembly can elect and the number of Assembly Commissioners it can appoint. The reforms proposed by the Commission would provide greater flexibility for the Assembly to determine its own ways of working, and to respond effectively to the potential pressures of a larger Assembly.
- In line with reforms made by the Scottish Parliament in 2012; to increase the time limit on when the first meeting after an Assembly election must be held from seven days to 14 days, thus extending the opportunities for discussions and negotiations between political parties after an election. This can be particularly important with proportional electoral systems such as that in use in the Assembly, which may be considered less likely to produce majority one-party governments.

- To increase the time limit within which the Assembly must elect a Deputy Presiding Officer, from the current requirement of the first meeting after an election to 28 days, in line with the time limit for the election of the First Minister. This would extend the opportunities available for discussions and negotiations between political parties and for newly elected Members to decide whether to stand for election as Deputy Presiding Officer, or to get to know the strengths and weaknesses of potential candidates.

770 responses were received to this question.

Of those 770 responses, 60 per cent (460) agreed with the proposed reforms to provide greater flexibility for the Assembly to determine its own ways of working, including six per cent (50) who agreed but specified some conditions.

A common issue raised in response to this question by those who agreed with the proposals was that the Assembly's internal arrangements are, or should be, a matter wholly devolved for Wales. Responses that supported the proposal also stated that there should be greater autonomy for the Assembly; that Wales should have maximum control over the Assembly's arrangements; and that the Assembly should determine its own working practices:

...this would be a logical move in line with the process and progress of devolution

(Member of the public)

The benefits of greater flexibility for the Assembly to determine its own arrangements, according to some responses, include increased impartiality, stability and efficiency. Some noted that allowing the Assembly to determine its own arrangements would allow it to follow best practice and be responsive to changes to the demands on the Assembly.

Some responses commented on the inflexibility of the statutory internal arrangements prescribed for the Assembly by the UK Government:

Legislation is not always the best answer as it is generally inflexible, always open to (expensive) dispute and interpretation and will need constant adaptation and amendment as circumstances change. Legislate for limits as to what is not permitted, leave the rest open to a flexible management.

(Member of the public)

Some of those in favour of the proposals urged caution, suggesting for example that public consultation would be required before changes to the Assembly's working practices were introduced.

As noted above, six per cent (50) of responses to question 21 agreed with the proposed changes subject to certain conditions, in particular that they should not lead to an increase in costs. Responses also suggested that there was a risk that changes to internal arrangements could be skewed to favour the dominant party in Wales and that any such changes should therefore have to be agreed by all political parties:

Within reason, yes. Safeguards need to be in place to ensure systems are not manipulated if one party or coalition dominates.
(Member of the public)

Transparency was another condition noted in several responses:

Transparency is everything, and using internal procedures opens the door for a lack of transparency. If internal procedures are used, then they must be published, citizens should be able to review the suggestions, and respond accordingly. There should be procedures in place to allow input from citizens to be taken into account. The use of internal procedures - as we see with Statutory Instruments - allows all sorts of hidden issues to sneak under the table
(Member of the public)

30 per cent (240) of responses to this question disagreed that the Government of Wales Act 2006 should be amended in order to give the Assembly greater flexibility to determine its own working practices and arrangements.

Those who gave reasons for disagreeing with the proposals focused on issues concerning accountability and transparency. A number of responses noted that legislation ensured an audit trail or that there needed to be a level of oversight of Assembly arrangements which was only possible through legislative scrutiny:

Legislation gives the opportunity for full disclosure and debate in an open forum before changes are made. Changes through procedure does not provide a similar level of scrutiny.
(Member of the public)

A number of responses felt that flexibility without stringent rules could give scope for abuses of power, especially by the strongest political party. Some suggested arrangements to avoid or mitigate this risk:

Parliament – which has democratically elected Welsh representatives – is sovereign and should decide any changes
(Member of the public)

If, however, the powers were delegated to, say, an independent scrutiny committee I could approve...
(Member of the public)

Issues of cost, efficiency and effectiveness were also raised by those who were opposed to the Assembly having greater flexibility.

19 responses to this question were received from organisations. 13 were in favour of the proposed reforms as set out in the consultation document. The other organisations that commented on this question did not provide a clear view one way or the other on the proposal.

The main reason given by organisations for supporting the proposal was that the Assembly should be free to decide on its own arrangements:

...as the senior elected body in Wales, we cannot see any reason why they [the National Assembly for Wales] do not have this power.
(Maesteg Town Council)

7. What impact might these proposals have?

The consultation asked about the impact of the proposals on the Assembly's official languages; equality, diversity and inclusion; and the justice system in England and Wales. It also asked about the costs and benefits to which the proposals could give rise.

Key findings

- Relatively few responses were received to a question about the potential impacts of the proposals on the Assembly's official languages; equality, diversity and inclusion; and the justice system in England and Wales. Of the 310 responses to this question, most expressed general views about these issues rather than identifying specific impacts.
- Of the 200 responses received to a question about any costs not identified elsewhere in the consultation, some commented on the potential costs to the Assembly and the taxpayer if the size of the institution was increased, although few attempted to quantify any such additional costs.
- Of the 180 responses to a question about any benefits not identified elsewhere in the consultation, only a small number identified specific benefits, including better democracy and governance, greater devolution or more independence for Wales, improved representation, and greater use of the Welsh language.

Summary of responses

We asked:

Question 22. Are there any issues, benefits or risks which could result from the proposals in this document in relation to the following, that are not considered in this consultation, or that you would like to comment on?

- **The Assembly's official languages (Welsh and English)**
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- **The justice system in England and Wales**

Could any of the proposals be reformulated so as to increase the positive effects or reduce the possible adverse effects? Please give reasons for your answer.

310 responses were received to this question.

A number of responses simply answered yes or no to this question without being specific about which aspect of question 22 they were answering. It is therefore not possible to draw conclusions based on those answers.

Many of the responses to this question expressed general views on the Assembly's official languages; equalities, diversity and inclusion; or the justice system. Very few addressed specifically what impact, if any, the proposals in the consultation might have on these issues. Those that did do so generally felt that the proposals either would, or should, have a positive effect on the official languages or on equalities, diversity and inclusion. Some noted that any proposals should be subject to appropriate checks and balances in relation to their impact on the official languages, equalities and justice.

A small number of responses suggested that an increase in the size of the Assembly could lead to an increase in translation requirements.

In relation to equalities, diversity and inclusion, one response suggested that gender quotas for candidates could affect political parties' objectives, for example if a party which represented women's rights was required to select a quota of male candidates. Other responses noted that the proposals relating to the electoral system focused on gender, not other protected characteristics.

20 per cent (60) of responses to this question referred to the devolution of justice to Wales. The vast majority of these responses were in favour of devolving

responsibility for the justice system to Wales. Reasons given to support this view included: a desire to reflect the situation in Scotland; and a need for Wales to have greater powers over its own affairs in order to enable the Assembly to integrate policy on justice and other devolved areas.

12 per cent (40) of responses to this question expressed support for increasing the status and practical use of the Welsh language. Responses did not generally offer specific proposals on how this should be achieved, although the following were suggested:

- Making Welsh the only official language of the Assembly, giving Welsh equal status to English, or including the Welsh language as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010.
- Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the Chamber, for example by encouraging Welsh-speaking Members to use the Welsh language more, or by removing barriers to using Welsh in the Assembly.
- Requiring Members and Ministers to be able to speak Welsh or giving Members Welsh lessons.
- Providing all election materials bilingually.
- Having Welsh-only names for Assembly roles and buildings.

12 per cent (40) of responses to this question opposed any increase in the status and use of the Welsh language. Responses did not generally offer specific proposals for change, although reasons given to support the views expressed included:

- Perception that the Welsh language was a waste of time and money.
- Support for the Welsh language in principle, but opposition to it being supported financially or given a higher status than English.
- Concern about the potential for the Assembly and other employers to recruit staff, or political parties to select candidates, on the basis of their language abilities or protected characteristics rather than on merit.

Nine organisations responded to this question. Geldards LLP noted that it did not think an Assembly with fewer than 90 Members would be able to undertake the additional functions resulting from a devolution of justice to Wales.

The Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales emphasised the importance of a range of measures to address the lack of female representation within legislatures:

It's important to note that there are many factors that influence the lack of diversity and intersectionality of Assembly Members, that goes beyond electoral reform and the implementation of quotas, which WEN Wales also supports. While many experts agree that reforms to the electoral system may help increase the representation of women in legislatures, it is essential to also note that electoral reform cannot stand alone as the solution to gaining 50:50 representation, because this solution ignores the impact of societal and cultural barriers that have long prevented women from participating in electoral politics at the same rates as men.

(Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales)

We asked:

Question 23. Would any of the proposals in this paper result in: i) costs or ii) benefits for you or your organisation which you have not already outlined in your response to this consultation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

The consultation included a number of specific questions about the potential costs and benefits of the proposals. The analysis of responses to these specific questions is shown at the appropriate place in this report. Question 23 provided respondents with the opportunity to identify any additional costs and benefits which they had not previously highlighted. In the online surveys and response forms, the question was presented as two separate parts: 23i) relating to costs, and 23ii) relating to benefits.

200 responses were received to **question 23i)** relating to costs.

Of those 200 responses, 35 per cent (70) said the proposals would not result in costs for them or their organisations. Few responses identified specific costs resulting from the proposals. Those that were identified included the following, although very few responses attempted to quantify these costs:

- The cost to the Assembly of more Members.
- The cost of the proposals for taxpayers.
- Additional translation costs.

A small number of responses said that the costs of the proposals would divert money away from the delivery of public services. A similar number suggested that the benefits of the proposals would outweigh their costs.

A few responses believed that any increased costs resulting from the proposals should be met by decreased costs elsewhere.

Seven organisations responded to this question. Five said the proposals would not result in additional costs for them. One said the proposals would not have any additional costs other than those it had already identified in its answers to other questions.

180 responses were received to **question 23ii)** on the benefits of the proposals.

Of those 180 responses, 33 per cent (60) said the proposals would have little or no benefit for them or their organisations. A small number of responses identified specific benefits. Those that were identified included:

- Better democracy.
- Better governance.
- Greater devolution or more independence for Wales.
- Improved representation.
- More diversity in the Assembly and greater use of the Welsh language.

Seven organisations responded to this question. Two organisations said that the benefits would include improved democratic engagement by young people, and better scrutiny of the Welsh Government's work.

8. Other issues raised

Some organisations raised issues relating to the Assembly's electoral, organisational and internal arrangements which were not covered in the consultation. This section of the report provides a summary of these issues.

Electoral registration

The Electoral Commission made some suggestions for reform of the electoral registration process, including:

- Options to enable people to make an application to register to vote when using other online public services including, for example, as part of their driving licence or passport application or tax return submission.
- Improved access to data from other public service providers for Electoral Returning Officers, to enable them to target their activity at new electors or those who have recently moved.
- Exploration of how a more integrated approach to electoral registration could feature greater use of direct registration by Electoral Returning Officers or automatic enrolment processes (for example, the direct enrolment of young people as part of the process of obtaining a national insurance number).

Regulatory framework for elections

The Electoral Commission proposed potential reform of the regulatory framework for elections, including:

- The transparency of online campaigning i.e. online campaigning should be as transparent as traditional campaigning and should be subject to the same rules and restrictions.
- Imprints on digital material i.e. online campaign material produced by political parties and non-party campaigners should include an imprint stating who has published it.
- The reporting of digital campaigning and other campaigning i.e. campaigners should be required to report more detailed breakdowns of

spending on different types of advertising such as online and social media promotion.

- The preparation of statutory codes of practice for future National Assembly for Wales elections relating to election expenditure.
- Regulation of expenditure on staff time by political parties i.e. the money that political parties spend on staffing their election campaigns should be controlled by spending limits in the same way as money that is spent on activities such as producing campaign material or market research.
- Increasing the Electoral Commission's regulatory and sanctioning powers i.e. the Electoral Commission currently enforces the rules for political and non-party campaigners. This should be extended to include offences relating to candidate spending and donations at Assembly elections.
- Registration of party names and descriptions for use on ballot papers i.e. where a candidate represents a political party on a ballot paper, it should be clear to voters which party the candidate represents.
- Transparency and accessibility of candidate spending i.e. Electoral Returning Officers should be required to publish spending returns online as well as through the existing methods.
- The accessibility of elections i.e. there should be no barriers to voting by disabled people and everyone should have a right to vote on their own and in secret.

The role of Electoral Returning Officers

The Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales) suggested that Electoral Returning Officer (ERO) remuneration should be regularly reviewed and evaluated, and that the way in which EROs are remunerated should reflect the independence of the role, as well as the personal liabilities, responsibilities and workload.

Engagement with a larger Assembly

The Welsh Local Government Association stated that they or other organisations could find it more challenging to engage with a larger Assembly.

Equality and diversity

The Equality and Human Rights Commission asked for consideration to be given to the monitoring of the diversity of Assembly Members and candidates, to develop a greater understanding of the diversity of the National Assembly and understand how well this represents the diverse population of Wales.

This point was also made by Chwarae Teg. Citing the increasing requirements on companies to publish data about their gender pay gaps, which it argued had led to mainstreaming of the issues and greater understanding of the need for action, Chwarae Teg suggested that improving the diversity data about electoral candidates could have a similar effect. It highlighted its support for the Expert Panel's recommendation that the Secretary of State be requested to commence section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Welsh elections or to transfer the power to do so to Welsh Ministers. In the absence of section 106 being commenced, Chwarae Teg suggested that legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements should include provision to secure the availability of information regarding the diversity of electoral candidates.

Annex 1: List of consultation questions

Question 1. The Expert Panel has concluded that the Assembly needs to have between 80 and 90 Members to carry out its role effectively.

Do you agree?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 2. Would changes to the number of Assembly Members result in: i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

Question 3. The Expert Panel has outlined three possible electoral systems which could operate effectively in Wales to elect an Assembly of at least 80 Members:

- Single Transferable Vote
- Flexible List Proportional Representation
- Mixed Member Proportional (also known as Additional Member System)

Which of these systems would be most appropriate for electing Assembly Members and why?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 4. Do you agree with the Expert Panel's recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Question 5. If you answered yes to question 4, do you believe that this should be achieved through legislation such as formal gender quotas, or by less formal means such as voluntary measures put in place by political parties?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 6. Should people be able to stand for election to the Assembly on the basis of job sharing?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Question 7. What, if any, benefits or risks do you see resulting from allowing people to stand for election on the basis of job sharing arrangements?

Question 8. If the Assembly adopted either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation for the election of Assembly Members, should Assembly Members be elected on the basis of:

- 20 constituencies based on pairing the existing 40 Assembly constituencies
- 17 constituencies based on the existing 22 local authority areas?
- Don't know

Question 9. Would changes to the Assembly's electoral system result in i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

Question 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The same people should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections and in local government elections in Wales.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Question 11. What implications would there be if there were differences between who could vote in Assembly elections and who could vote in local government elections in Wales?

Question 12. What should be the minimum voting age for Assembly elections?

- 16
- 18
- Don't know

Question 13. Would reducing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections result in i) costs, or ii) benefits, for you or your organisation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

Question 14. Are there any other issues, benefits or risks you would like us to consider in relation to changing the minimum voting age for Assembly elections?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

All legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Question 16. Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of non-UK nationals legally resident in Wales to vote in Assembly elections?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

17(i) Prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the UK Government's intention for UK elections.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

17(ii) Prisoners whose due release date falls before the end of the term of the Assembly for which they are voting should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the Welsh Government's intention for local government elections in Wales.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Question 18. Are there any other issues, risks or benefits you would like us to consider in relation to changing the rights of prisoners to vote in Assembly elections?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 19. Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement the recommendations of the Fourth Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to disqualification from being an Assembly Member?

Are there any other changes which should be made to the disqualification arrangements?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 20. Should legislation to reform the Assembly's electoral arrangements include provision to implement:

- the Electoral Commission's recommendations that costs relating to translation between Welsh and English should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners?
- the Electoral Commission's recommendations that costs relating to an individual's disability should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners?
- the Law Commissions' recommendations in relation to the conduct and administration of elections?

Please give reasons for your answers.

Question 21. Should the *Government of Wales Act 2006* be amended as set out in this consultation document, in order to give the Assembly greater flexibility to determine its own working practices and arrangements through its internal procedures rather than in legislation?

Question 22. Are there any issues, benefits or risks which could result from the proposals in this document in relation to the following, that are not considered in this consultation, or that you would like to comment on:

- the Assembly's official languages (Welsh and English)?
- equality, diversity and inclusion?
- the justice system in England and Wales?

Could any of the proposals be reformulated so as to increase the positive effects or reduce the possible adverse effects?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 23. Would any of the proposals in this paper result in: i) costs or ii) benefits for you or your organisation which you have not already outlined in your response to this consultation? If so, what would the costs or benefits be?

Annex 2: List of organisations that responded to the consultation

Abolish The Welsh Assembly Party

Association of Electoral Administrators (Wales)

Auditor General for Wales (Wales Audit Office)

CSP-Cymru Cyf

Cwmni Cyfieithu a-pedwar cyf

Cyngor Cymuned Llanpumsaint

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Chwarae Teg

Diocesan Bishop of St David's & The Holy Trinity

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Electoral Reform Society Cymru

Flintshire 50+ Action Group

Geldards LLP

Gorwel Ltd

Hansard Society

Law Society of England and Wales, Wales Committee

Maesteg Town Council

Make Votes Matter

Malltraeth Ymlaen Cyf

Morgan Academy, Swansea University

Mudiad Meithrin

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

New Radnor Community Council

National Union of Students Wales

Old Radnor Community Council

Pontypridd Town Council

Presteigne and Norton Town Council

TW Hairdressing and Beauty

The Bay

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission's Wales Electoral Coordination Board

Wales Green Party

Welsh Liberal Democrats

Welsh Local Government Association

Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales

Wye Reclaim

Annex 3: Technical explanation

Introduction

This annex explains how the analysis was undertaken and gives details of some technical issues relating to the analysis.

It covers the methodology used, how the closed and open questions were analysed, how the numbers were rounded and how the percentages were calculated.

Methodology

The Assembly Commission consulted the people of Wales between 12 February and 6 April 2018 on the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, and on other reforms to the Assembly's electoral and operational arrangements that could make the institution a more accessible and effective legislature.

We provided a series of different online surveys to give people the choice to respond to all of the issues covered in the consultation or to specific issues of interest to them. For the purpose of analysis, all responses have been collated. This includes the online surveys, consultation response forms, Easy Read response forms, emails and other correspondence.

We received over 3,200 valid consultation submissions, the majority through the online surveys.

There were an additional 630 online responses where the participant provided some or all of their personal details, but did not answer any of the questions. These responses have not been counted as valid responses, and are not included in any of the analyses in this report.

The number of responses to each of the surveys (English and Welsh versions) where at least one question was answered (including those who responded by email, easy read or hand written) was as follows:

Creating a Parliament for Wales (full survey)	1,070
How many Members does the Assembly need? (Questions 1 and 2 only)	820
How should Members be elected? (Questions 3 to 9 only)	400

Who should be allowed to vote? (Questions 10 to 18 only)	680
Who should be able to be an AM? (Question 19 only)	90
Should the law be rationalised? (Question 20 only)	130
Internal arrangements (Questions 21 to 23 only)	110

Participants were able to respond to the consultation more than once, for example by responding to more than one of the issue specific online surveys or by completing the full survey and then also completing an issue specific survey. For this reason, the 3,200 submissions cannot be directly equated to 3,200 separate respondents. However, analysis of the consultation responses suggests that only a small number of respondents completed more than one online survey.

Of the 3,200 responses, 37 were from companies or organisations, including private businesses, public bodies, academic institutions, voluntary organisations, charities, political parties and representative bodies. The numbers of responses shown in this report include all responses from individuals and organisations.

The number of responses to individual questions varied considerably. The largest number of responses (1,830) was to questions 1 and/or 2 about the number of Assembly Members. The smallest number of responses (420) was to question 20iii) about the Law Commission’s recommendations on the conduct of elections.

The figures shown in brackets in the report are the numbers of responses that gave a specified answer, expressed a specified view or raised a specified issue.

Closed and open questions

The consultation included both multiple choice (closed) and open questions.

The multiple choice questions were analysed by simply totalling up the number of responses for each option and calculating percentages based on the total number of responses to each question.

The only exception to this is question 3 where the multiple choice question did not provide an option to select none of the three possible electoral systems. However in the second part of the question where respondents were asked to give reasons for their answer, a significant number stated that they didn’t support any of the three options in the multiple choice part. Based on the multiple choice part of the question alone, 62 per cent supported Single Transferable Vote. However taking account of both parts of question 3, this percentage is reduced to 54 per cent, as 13 per cent did not support any of the three options (see Figure 4).

Responses to open questions were grouped according to views expressed or themes raised. The grouping was done by the use of a coding system for each question that was devised by reading all of the responses and then allocating a separate code to each of the most common responses.

For example the codes used for question 2i) were as follows:

- a=costs for respondent (including tax rises)
- b=costs for respondent's organisation
- c=costs for the Assembly itself (for example: salaries, expenses, office/chamber space, support staff)
- d=minimal/no additional costs
- e=costs but beneficial/offset by other savings
- f=impact on public services/money needed elsewhere
- g=unsure/unclear
- h=other

The codes for the second part of question 1 and question 2 were analysed together, as many of the responses raised similar issues. So, for example, some responses mentioned cost as a reason for not agreeing with an increase in the number of Members in question 1, but did not repeat this in response to question 2, while others only mentioned costs in response to question 2. The figure for the number of responses that mention cost in relation to more Members quoted on page 13 (820) is the sum of those who mentioned it in question 1, plus the number who mentioned it in question 2 but not in question 1.

We calculated the number of responses that mentioned a particular view or theme for each open question using the allocated codes. We then calculated the percentage of the responses which fell within the thematic groups. The report therefore outlines the most commonly raised views and themes only. Many of the responses to open questions also referred to more than one view or theme. In these cases each response was given several different codes. The totals therefore do not always add up to the total number of responses to a question and the percentages do not always add up to 100.

Rounding

All figures relating to the number of responses received have been rounded to the nearest ten.²⁶ Where the number of responses ended in five, the total was rounded down (for example: 56 rounded to 60, 54 rounded to 50, 55 rounded to 50).

Percentages have been calculated using the actual number of responses rounded to the nearest complete one per cent. As a result the number of responses do not always add up exactly to the total and the percentages do not always add up to exactly 100.

For example:

The number of Members the Assembly needs according to those opposed to a larger Assembly

Total responses: 706

Rounded total: 710

Did not suggest an appropriate number of Assembly Members

Number of responses: 481

Rounded to nearest 10: 480

Percentage: $481/706 = 68.1$ per cent

Rounded percentage to nearest whole percentage point: 68 per cent

Keep 60 Members

Number of responses: 90

Rounded to nearest 10: 90

Percentage: $90/706 = 12.7$ per cent

Rounded percentage to nearest whole percentage point: 13 per cent

²⁶ Breakdowns of responses received from organisations are not rounded to the nearest 10 due to the small number of responses being analysed. These have been left as the actual number of responses in each case.

Fewer than 60 Members

Number of responses: 64

Rounded to nearest 10: 60

Percentage: $64/706 = 9.1$ per cent

Rounded percentage to nearest whole percentage point: 9 per cent

Abolish the Assembly

Number of responses: 71

Rounded to nearest 10: 70

Percentage: $71/706 = 10.1$ per cent

Rounded percentage to nearest whole percentage point: 10 per cent

Sum of unrounded figures: $481+90+64+71=706$

Rounded total: 710

Sum of rounded figures: $480+90+60+70=700$

As only a small number of responses were received from organisations, the analyses of organisational responses give the actual number of such responses received.

