



## Highlight report to the Commission – April–September 2015

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## November 2015

## Highlight report to the Commission – April to September 2015

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The highlight report outlines work that has been undertaken, or is underway, to make progress towards the Commission's strategic goals. The report aims to provide Commissioners with useful information so that they can perform their role of oversight and holding management to account. This report gives an update on key activities and projects between April and September 2015.

### A. Strategic Goal – provide outstanding parliamentary support

#### 2.0 Constitutional change

2.1 Following the St. David's Day announcement (February 2015), which confirmed the areas of consensus across the parties in Westminster on the recommendations of the Silk Commission, the UK Government confirmed that a Wales Bill will be introduced in Parliament in 2016. A draft Wales Bill was published in late October 2015 for pre-legislative scrutiny, with the Bill itself to be presented for First Reading in early 2016.

2.2 The Bill will change the devolution settlement to a reserved powers model and devolve further powers to Wales; including competence for the Assembly to control its own operational and electoral arrangements. It will also contain provisions to put the permanence of the Assembly and the legislative consent process on a statutory basis.

2.3 Since the publication of the UK Government's 'Powers for a Purpose' command paper, the Presiding Officer has met and corresponded with the Secretary of State regarding the draft Wales Bill and, particularly, on provisions relating to the Assembly itself and the proposed move to reserved powers.

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2.4 In June the Presiding Officer gave evidence to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee's short inquiry into the UK Government's proposals for further devolution. She clearly set out her priorities for the forthcoming Bill, which accorded with the Committee recommendation that the UK Government should use "the principle of subsidiarity as a starting point" when drafting the Wales Bill.

2.5 Over the summer, the Presiding Officer also contributed to a number of other constitutional issues, including:

- UK Government's proposals to implement English Votes for English Laws (EVEL);
- House of Lords Constitution Committee inquiry on Devolution and the Future of the Union;
- House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee's BBC Charter Review; and
- the application of the Wilson Doctrine to Assembly Members.

### **3.0 Fiscal devolution**

3.1 Finance Committee is continuing the work associated with the devolution of fiscal powers to Wales. The Tax Collection and Management (Wales) Bill was introduced in July and is currently subject to Stage 1 scrutiny. This Bill is the fundamental piece of legislation that will underpin any new taxes in Wales, specifically, in relation to Landfill and Land Transactions in the first instance. Work also continues on new budget procedures to ensure readiness for scrutiny of the budget following the fiscal changes in 2018.

### **4.0 Business Committee Legacy work**

4.1 The Business Committee has decided to produce a legacy report, to be published in the spring term that will look at its work during the Fourth Assembly, including the structures it has put in place, the procedural reforms it has introduced, and its ways of working. The final report will help inform the successor committee in making key decisions at the start of the Fifth Assembly as well as any decisions to be taken by the successor Assembly Commission on appropriate levels of support for Assembly Business.

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4.2 The Committee launched a public consultation on these issues, and has written to individual Members, Assembly committees and party groups asking for submissions by mid–November.

### **5.0 Chair’s forum**

5.1 At the Presiding Officer’s request, Committee Chairs met on 24 September to take a strategic overview of the committee system during the Fourth Assembly and make recommendations for the Fifth Assembly.

5.2 The Chairs agreed a report to the Presiding Officer that will be submitted to the Business Committee’s consultation on Assembly business.

5.3 The Chairs’ Forum was extremely positive about committee achievements and its conclusions and recommendations about committee structures and processes in the Fifth Assembly are strong, bold and progressive. They endorsed the Assembly Commission’s vision for ‘world class’ committees and the role descriptions for a Chair, as set out by the Business Committee and Remuneration Board. The Chairs also gave significant emphasis to the continuing professional development of Chairs and Members.

5.4 The Chairs’ report will propose a range of constructive ideas for increasing the capacity, flexibility and effectiveness of committees in the Fifth Assembly.

### **6.0 Fifth Assembly Committees Action Plan**

6.1 A Committee Services Action Plan has been compiled for staff preparing for the transition to the Fifth Assembly. It contains distinct work strands to help ensure the legacy from Fourth Assembly committees is clear and that we can make the most of our collective experiences.

6.2 The work will also prepare us to use the most current and appropriate methods and technology to support the work of the new committees effectively and efficiently, whilst ensuring that good governance arrangements are proportionately met.

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### **7.0 Remuneration Board**

- 7.1 The independent Remuneration Board considered every aspect of the Fifth Assembly Remuneration package for Assembly Members. This included a full review of pension arrangements, changes to matters relating to the arrangements for AMSS, allowances for Assembly Members and Assembly Member salaries.
- 7.2 The Board published its Determination for the Fifth Assembly, which sets out these matters, in May 2015 – in line with its objective to report one year before the Assembly elections in May 2016.
- 7.3 The Remuneration Board members completed their term of office and published a legacy report in September 2015. The newly appointed members started their induction programme in September, which will continue over the coming months.
- 7.4 The Member Pension scheme was submitted for HM Treasury formal approval during the summer recess. It will be finalised by the new Board.
- 7.5 Over the coming months, the Remuneration Board will discuss AMSS salaries for the 2016/17 pay award, office costs and residential allowances, together with its strategy for the Fifth Assembly.

### **8.0 New rules on Members' financial and other interests**

- 8.1 On 1 September 2015, the new rules on Members' interests came into force following their approval in Plenary on 17 June. The rules are the culmination of the work of the Standards of Conduct and Business Committees, based on findings submitted by the Commissioner for Standards, who conducted a consultation on the existing rules between the autumn of 2013 and early 2014.
- 8.2 Taken as a whole, the changes will provide greater clarity, certainty and transparency to Members and the public on the rules on Members' interests – both in making oral declarations in Assembly proceedings and in registering interests in the Register of Members' Interests.
- 8.3 The Table Office took steps to make Members aware of the changes, producing documents summarising the rules, notifying Members of

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the changes through email and providing drop-in sessions with Table Office Clerks and the Commissioner for Standards, to discuss how the new rules work in practice, which were very positively received.

### 9.0 Siambro Project

9.1 Good progress has been made with interim improvements completed over the summer recess:

- new drawers were added to each Siambro desk to improve the Members' working space;
- working with the Assembly's Host Broadcaster, we have identified preferred suppliers for the new equipment, including monitors and the new conferencing and voting system;
- we are concentrating on developing and integrating our preferred supplier's meeting management software; and
- detailed design work is underway to ensure best use of the working space with the proposed new equipment. Reconfiguration and installation work is planned for the dissolution period, ready for the first sitting of the new Assembly in May 2016.

### 10.0 Information and Communications Technology

#### *New telephony system*

10.1 The Assembly's new telephone system was introduced in July 2015, is fully integrated into the IT network and runs on Skype for Business messaging and communication software. The project delivered brand new infrastructure, new handsets for all users on the Assembly Estate, and new call centres in Colwyn Bay and Tŷ Hywel.

10.2 It is more advanced and resilient than the previous system and significantly cheaper to run, saving the Assembly approximately £180,000 per year.

#### *Improvements to the ICT Provision for Constituency Offices*

10.3 Improvements to ICT provision for Constituency Offices started over the summer. On an office-by-office basis, we have been replacing current broadband circuits with new lines, to get the best possible speeds available in each area. We have installed new routers to allow

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full wi-fi access for users, upgraded the memory of every PC and laptop and introduced Microsoft Office 2013 to users.

- 10.4 This work will provide more flexible wi-fi access and potentially better speeds for users, whilst saving the Assembly tens of thousands of pounds per year, once all the locations have been upgraded.

### *The new host broadcasting contract*

- 10.5 Following a competitive tender exercise, the Assembly's host broadcasting contract was awarded to Bow Tie Television, on a five-year contract from 1 September 2015. It gives the Assembly significant benefits: for delivering new projects; developing the audio visual systems across its estate; and providing a first-rate broadcasting service covering Assembly proceedings.

### *Overseas links (ICT)*

- 10.6 As part of our ongoing ties with the Fijian Parliament, Rovil Kumar, their Head of ICT, spent two weeks with the ICT team at the start of the autumn term. Rovil's main aim was to find out more about how the Assembly uses systems and applications to present business information to Members, with a focus on using mobile devices.

## **11.0 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Members and AMSS**

- 11.1 Between April and September 2015 a wide range of training and development opportunities were attended by Assembly Members and support staff. In total 101 opportunities were taken up by Assembly Members and 315 CPD opportunities undertaken by AMSS. Activities included:

- Programme for Committee Chairs
- Member Induction for two new Members
- Legislation workshop
- Wales Bill and Reserved Powers Briefing
- St. David's Day Announcement Briefing
- Gloywi Iaith for Members and AMSS
- Weekly Welsh lessons and intensive Welsh courses
- Speech Writing
- Mindfulness for AMSS

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- Level 5 Management and Leadership Diploma
- Research service policy knowledge session
- First Aid at Work and Mental Health First Aid
- Create an Effective Newsletter
- How to Produce Video Content to Enhance Social Media Campaigns.

### 12.0 Engagement and the work of the Assembly on EU affairs

#### *Activities of Committee of the Regions (CoR) Members*

- 12.1 Mick Antoniw AM and Rhodri Glyn Thomas have been actively involved in the work of this Brussels-based EU Institution.
- 12.2 Both of the Assembly's representatives on the CoR were nominated as rapporteurs to prepare reports for the CoR during this period. Mick Antoniw's opinion on Standards of Remuneration in Employment in the EU was adopted by the SEDEC Commission of the Committee of the Regions in June and is due to go to plenary in December. Rhodri Glyn Thomas's opinion on Developing the Potential of Ocean Energy was adopted by the ENVE Commission in June and adopted at CoR plenary in October – being the fourth occasion Rhodri has presented in Welsh in Brussels' plenary. Rhodri also gave evidence to Enterprise and Business Committee's Maritime Economy inquiry in September, as well as attending a number of EU conferences including the Ocean Energy Europe conference in Dublin in October.
- 12.3 Mick continued his role as a key player in the response to the Ukrainian crisis, including through the CoR's CORLEAP (Eastern European Partnership political forum), with visits to the Ukraine in April, July and September.
- 12.4 After over 2 years in this role, Mick stood down from the CoR following his appointment as Chair of the All Wales Programme Monitoring Committee for the European Structural and Investment Funds in Wales.

#### *Engagement with Welsh MEPs and European Commission Office in Wales*

- 12.5 In May the Presiding Officer hosted a meeting of Assembly Chairs with all four Welsh MEPs, the first occasion they have met the Welsh

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MEPs since the 2014 election. Three of the four Welsh MEPs participated in a meeting of the Assembly's Cross Party Group on Europe (chaired by William Powell AM), hosted by the European Commission's Office in Wales. They have also participated in the work of a number of Committees, including video conferencing and during Brussels visits, as well as meeting with Mick and Rhodri in their work for the CoR. Also in May, Mick Antoniw and the European Commission Office in Wales jointly hosted a Europe Day reception in the Senedd.

### *Other EU-related work*

- 12.6 A wide range of EU-related work has been addressed by a number of Assembly Committees, and in plenary. Details can be found in Issue 32 of "Europe matters" (up to the period August 2015) which is available from this link: <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/research/Pages/europe-matters.aspx> .
- 12.7 One of the regular features of the Fourth Assembly has been a meeting of Chairs of Committees with the UK Ambassadors of the relevant EU Presidency of the Council. In September, Chairs met with the Luxembourg Ambassador to the UK His Excellency Patrick Engelberg.
- 12.8 The EU Office and the Research Service have produced a range of pro-active publications to support Members' work on EU issues. These include the EU Weekly Update, Europe Matters, the @SeneddEurope twitter feed, and EU Policy Updates and blogs on InBrief Research blog, including the Juncker Investment Plan, TTIP (EU-US trade negotiations), biodiversity policy, organic products, GMOs, farming crisis, rural development and the UK Government's EU reform agenda.

## **B. Strategic goal – engage with the people of Wales and promote Wales**

### **13.0 Women in Public Life**

#### *Women in Public Life lecture series*

- 13.1 The Presiding Officer has continued her focus on breaking down barriers to more women entering public life through her #POWiPL campaign.
- 13.2 In July, former Prime Minister of Australia, Welsh-born Julia Gillard, was the guest speaker at the #POWiPL lecture in the Senedd. This was the best attended #POWiPL lecture of the series. During her time as Prime Minister, Ms Gillard faced the sort of personal attacks from the media and political opponents not faced by men in her position.

#### *Women in Democracy Caucus*

- 13.3 In September, the National Assembly's cross-party Women in Democracy Caucus, met to discuss the implementation of some of its recommendations included in their report, published earlier in 2015. Representatives from S4C and ITV were invited to the meeting to discuss how they intend to address the lack of women being used as expert contributors to their news and current affairs programming.

#### *Events to encourage women into public office*

- 13.4 A Women in Public Life Networking Fair was held at the National Eisteddfod in August, providing organisations the opportunity to speak to women about vacancies on their boards and for women, who are looking for board positions, to better understand the roles.
- 13.5 In September, sixteen women representing the Belfast Interface Project's 'Women in Society' programme came to the Senedd to learn more about the National Assembly for Wales and, in particular, the #POWiPL campaign.
- 13.6 Their programme aims *to educate women from across North Belfast about the different roles of women in society through the ages, in particular how women have progressed from a home and nurturing*

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*environment to gaining respect and holding positions of power within political systems such as the Assembly.*

- 13.7 The Presiding Officer spoke about her own political journey into politics and the work the #POWiPL campaign has done to get more Welsh women involved in public life. It also demonstrates that her campaign is increasingly being seen as an exemplar across Europe.
- 13.8 Further afield, the Presiding Officer was invited to visit Georgia, which provided her an opportunity to talk about the #POWiPL campaign and scheme with representatives of the Georgian Parliament and other women guests.

### 14.0 **Vote@16? campaign**

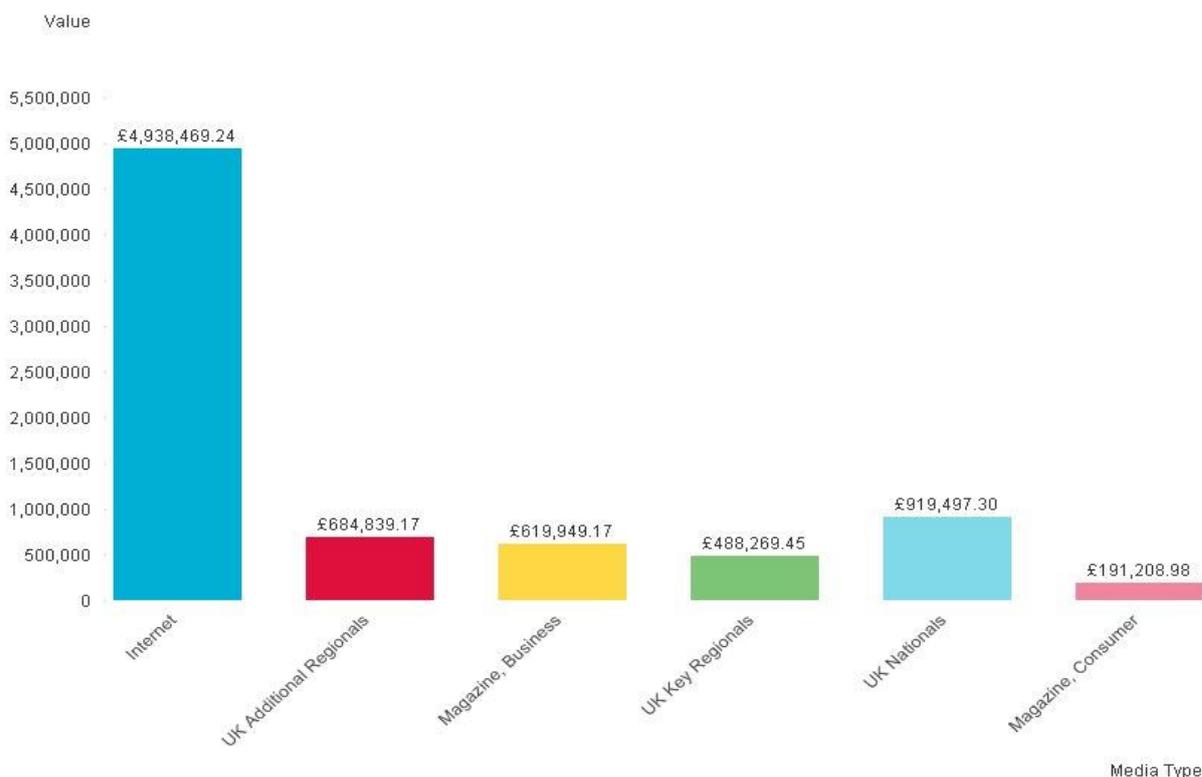
- 14.1 In July, the results of the Assembly's Vote@16 survey were announced. With more than 10,000 young people responding, it was the biggest ever response to an Assembly consultation.
- 14.2 53% of respondents agreed that the voting age should be reduced. 79% of those who participated in the survey agreed that children and young people should learn more about politics and elections.
- 14.3 This specific consultation comes on top of the 10,000 young people directly included in the work of Assembly committees since the Presiding Officer and leaders of the four political parties signed the Assembly's Youth Charter in July 2014.

### 15.0 **Media Coverage**

- 15.1 Examples of the coverage received for the Presiding Officer's events and corporate events are shown at **Annex A**.
- 15.2 **Annex B** shows charts that give an indication of the value of that media work.
- 15.3 The first chart (below) reveals how much it would have cost in terms of advertising to buy the same amount of editorial space that the Assembly's media output received in print and online (no advertising comparison for Social Media at this stage). It is split between the keyword categories that we use to search our material through our media monitoring. For example, to buy the same advertising space in

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terms of the coverage we got on internet sites would have cost the Assembly £4.9million.



### 16.0 Public engagement with Committees

16.1 Committees have been involved in a variety of public engagement activities to broaden the range of people contributing to their work, including:

- Policy and Legislation Committee staff worked in partnership with Chwarae Teg on a training programme to encourage women from minority groups to give evidence to committee inquiries. The first session on ‘what makes good evidence’ involved presentations from the Deputy Presiding Officer, staff from Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Research Service, Translation and Outreach. The Deputy CEO of Techniquest also talked about her experience as a previous participant in the programme and a witness to the Enterprise and Business Committee. Members of staff role-played Assembly Members in a ‘mock’ committee meeting, which helped

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demystify the experience of giving evidence and build the women's confidence in speaking in front of a committee, as well as giving staff a better understanding of what it is like to be a committee Member. The feedback from participants was very positive. A [photo-blog](#) of the event is available.

- Health and Social Care Committee adopted a number of innovative methods to engage with the people of Wales during its inquiry into alcohol and substance misuse. It established a [reference group](#), in partnership with NewLink Wales, to enable Members to draw on the experiences of service users and front-line service providers. In an Assembly Committee first, an online forum was set up to allow reference group members to share their views with Members between meetings using Loomio, decision-making software to assist groups with collaborative decision-making processes. They later attended an [Event](#) (photos) to raise points made on Loomio with Members of the Committee ahead of an evidence session with the Deputy Minister.

Members of the public and service providers were also invited to respond to an [anonymous online survey](#) so that those who may not usually respond to a Committee consultation could express their views. The Committee also developed a [dynamic summary of its report](#) using 'Slate' (see 16.2 below) to communicate its findings clearly and succinctly.

- Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee hosted a pre-legislative workshop in the Pierhead on 25 September on the anticipated draft Wales Bill, to inform stakeholders about the background to the draft Bill and advise them how to submit evidence, through presentations and roundtable discussions. It was attended by over 20 people from the main sectors the Bill is expected to cover – water, energy, marine conservation, ports and transport. [Photos from the event](#).

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16.2 Other committee engagement activity included:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Event / activity</b>
Enterprise and Business Committee	Business Breakfast meetings 11 June <a href="#">Cardiff</a> and 9 July <a href="#">Menai Bridge, Anglesey</a> (see links to photos) with local businesses, training providers and other invited guests to discuss the <b>Welsh Government’s Co-investment in Skills framework</b> .
Environment and Sustainability Committee	A <a href="#">video</a> of shell fishermen, filmed in June by the Outreach team for the Committee’s meeting in July, as part of their consultation on the <b>Environment (Wales) Bill</b> ; and survey promoted via social media, summer shows, and Understanding and Engaging sessions with community groups, receiving 1,663 responses with results collated into a <a href="#">summary report</a> for the committee.
Health and Social Care Committee	A <a href="#">video</a> of tattooists, acupuncturists and individuals who do piercings and offer electrolysis treatments, filmed in August by the Outreach team for the Committee’s meeting in September, as part of their consultation on the <b>Public Health (Wales) Bill</b> ; and survey (promoted as above), receiving 776 responses – see results in <a href="#">summary report</a> collated for the committee.
Petitions Committee	A survey, receiving 330 responses, the summary report of which will feed into the Committee’s <b>review of their Petitions system</b> .

*‘Slate’ summary reports*

16.3 The Communications team have been trialling different kinds of summaries to make committee reports easier to digest and the reports below were created using a precis of the report, presented in a visually appealing way (for the time being using a platform called Slate). The reports and their readership figures are below (up to 1 October 2015):

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- Alcohol and substance misuse in Wales  
E: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/MB98y/> (1244 views)  
W: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/4DjYV> (340 views)
- Should the Ombudsman have more powers?  
E: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/2QDDk/> (1437 views)  
W: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/0Zydk> (289 views)
- Poverty in Wales  
E: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/EN6np/> (1589 views)  
W: <https://slate.adobe.com/a/1PvbZ> (223 views)

### 17.0 Media coverage of committees

- 17.1 Considerable media coverage has been achieved for Assembly committees during this period. In particular, for reports covering poverty in Wales, safe nurse staffing levels, employment opportunities for over 50s, and alcohol and substance misuse.



Example of coverage for the poverty report from CELG in the Guardian



Example of coverage for the alcohol and substance misuse report from HSC on ITV Wales

- 17.2 Targeting of specialised audiences has also achieved results with the stage 1 report on the Local Government Bill, in particular, featuring in relevant media outlets.
- 17.3 **Annex C** gives a table showing reports issued with media activity by committee for the period April – Sept 2015.

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### 18.0 Social Media

18.1 Highlights for this period are shown in **Annex D**.

### 19.0 Understanding and engaging

19.1 The Outreach team have conducted Understanding and Engaging sessions with 22 groups between April 2015 and the end of September 2015, including RNIB, several regional sections of the Association of Voluntary Organisations and People First, Chwarae Teg and Popeth Cymraeg. A full list is available on request.

### 20.0 Involving young people in the work of the Assembly

#### *Youth Engagement: reaching out*

20.1 Between April and September the team delivered 193 sessions engaging with 126 different schools, colleges and youth organisations. Of these, there were 47 engagement activities involving youth groups and hard to reach young people. A full list is available on request. We engaged with 10,419 young people face to face and there were 54 instances of Assembly Member engagement with activities involving young people.

#### *First Youth Conference*

20.2 The highlight event of this period was the '**Assemble the Youth Conference**' on 15 July, where 27 different groups of young people came together to debate the outcomes of the Presiding Officer's ['Vote@16?' consultation](#).



**Delegates at the 'Assemble the Youth' Conference**

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- 20.3 Following a six-month consultation, where 10,375 young people gave their opinions on lowering the voting age, the conference provided an opportunity for the young delegates to continue the conversation on issues relating to the voter registration, education and to encourage more young people to vote in future elections.
- 20.4 The Children, Young People and Education Committee clerks also used this event, as well as the summer shows, to canvass young people's views on issues that the Committee should be looking at in its future work programme.

### *Welsh Baccalaureate workshops at Aberystwyth University*

- 20.5 The new 2015 Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification presents new opportunities for the Outreach team to further engage young people with Assembly Business. The team have developed new Community and Global Citizenship challenges and delivered new skills based workshops at Aberystwyth University.

### *Assembly Business*

- 20.6 During this period young people have been encouraged to provide their views on smoking, especially e-cigarettes, as part of the Public Health Bill and their views on charging bags for life as part of discussions surrounding the Environment Bill.

### *Young Assembly's Ambassador Scheme*

- 20.7 To extend our reach further into communities across Wales, a train the trainer programme for young people and professionals has been developed in conjunction with two youth forums. This will enable youth organisations to train their young people to train others about the work of the Assembly.

### *YourAssembly*

- 20.8 Improvements have been made to the Yourassembly site and the yourassembly twitter followers have reached over 1,400.

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### **21.0 Major Events**

#### *Battle of Britain – 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - 14 July*

21.1 The Presiding Officer hosted a commemorative service in the Pierhead to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain. This event was one of many commemoration services being held around the country. The commemoration, attended by veterans and officials, was an opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to Wales and the Welsh people for the part they played in the historic battle. Invited guests enjoyed a ‘Sunset Ceremony’ from the Band of the RAF Regiment.

#### *800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta*

21.2 To mark the anniversary, renowned historian, Professor David Carpenter, gave a lecture in the Pierhead exploring the role played by the Welsh rulers in the creation of the Magna Carta, one of the most famous documents in world history. Focussing on the rebellion against King John by Llewelyn, Prince of North Wales (later known as Llewelyn the Great) and his allies, Professor Carpenter explored the chapters dealing with their grievances, revealing that the Magna Carta is very much a British document, with important chapters on both Wales and Scotland.

### **22.0 Summer Events**

22.1 From the end of May until mid-September the Communications team travelled Wales as part of its annual Summer Events programme, visiting nine events and speaking to some 8000 people. Visitors to the Assembly stand were able to contribute to on-going Assembly inquiries through a series of questionnaires and also learn more about the Assembly, its Members and their work. We also delivered a series of events for the Environment and Sustainability Committee at the Royal Welsh and, again, sponsored the Societies Pavilion at the National Eisteddfod.

### **23.0 Promoting Wales Internationally**

23.1 The main international events and visits, including diplomatic visits can be found on page 9–10 in Issue 32 of ‘Europe matters’ (up to the period August 2015) which is available from this link:

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<http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/research/Pages/europe-matters.aspx>.

*Commonwealth Parliamentary Association*

23.2 On 24–27 May, the CPA Wales Branch was represented by a full delegation at this year’s regional conference, the theme of which was ‘Parliaments in the Face of Contemporary Challenges’. The BIMR Conference was hosted by the **CPA Cyprus Branch** in Limassol. A report of the conference can be found [here](#).

## **C. Strategic goal – use resources wisely**

### **24.0 Work on the Assembly estate – 10 year forward maintenance and refurbishment plan**

24.1 As part of the long-term (rolling) prioritised investment programme for the estate, the following replacement projects have been completed over the past six months in the Pierhead building and Tŷ Hywel:

#### *Air Conditioning in the Pierhead building*

24.2 As the units had reached the end of their life cycle and there was an increasing need for repairs, new units were installed throughout the Pierhead building to provide better and more efficient heating and cooling. A minimum reduction of 25% energy savings is expected.

#### *Tŷ Hywel Building Management System (BMS)*

24.3 The 22 year old BMS had exceeded its expected lifespan. It controls the major plant and equipment in Tŷ Hywel and the new system will allow for better reliability and performance of heating, cooling and ventilation, as well as improved energy management in line with our Carbon Reduction objectives.

#### *Fire alarm system within Tŷ Hywel*

24.4 The fire alarm had come to the end of its life cycle and replacement parts for repairs were becoming obsolete. The new system offers an open protocol allowing for future integration with other systems, such as access control. Other improvements included additional automatic fire detection and flashing beacons installed in areas identified through risk assessment.

### **25.0 Enhanced bilingual services**

25.1 Customers who call the National Assembly for Wales' main contact number can now select the language they would like to continue their call in. Customers can select Welsh or English, hear announcements and be greeted by a member of the Public Information team in their preferred language.

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### 26.0 Trip Advisor

26.1 In May 2015 the National Assembly for Wales received the [Certificate of Excellence](#) from Trip Advisor. The Certificate of Excellence is awarded to accommodations, attractions and restaurants that consistently earn great reviews.

### 27.0 Equality and accessibility

#### *Annual Equality Report 2014–15*

27.1 The Assembly's Annual Equality Report 2014–15 was published in July and charts progress on achieving the objectives set in our Equality Plan, celebrating the good work done across the organisation and including staff and recruitment monitoring data and our Equal Pay Audit.

#### *Equality and Diversity Week*

27.2 In June 2015, we had a week of activities and awareness raising as part of our annual Equality and Diversity Week. This year we delivered training on: Transgender Awareness, Bisexuality Awareness, Disability Confidence, Dementia Friends, and Supporting LGBT staff. We also promoted equality internally and externally, with awareness raising articles on: Carer's Week, the Assembly as an Inclusive Employer, Gender Stereotypes, Cultural Diversity, our BME Action Plan, Equality Impact Assessments, Supporting Disabled Staff, Unconscious Bias, and the Assembly as a Dementia Friendly organisation.

27.3 Over the period to September, the Assembly has:

- retained the **Action on Hearing Loss 'Louder than Words' Charter Mark**, a best practice charter for organisations striving to offer excellent levels of service for people who are deaf or have hearing loss. As part of this process, our facilities, communications support equipment and working practices were audited for their suitability and accessibility for those people;
- been represented at a range of **community events** over the summer, including Cardiff Pride and the Mela;

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- identified and provided **training to Mental Health First Aiders** across the organisation; and
- provided an introduction to **British Sign Language (BSL) training** for staff who have expressed an interest. The session acted as a taster for people who would like to proceed to learn level 1.

### *BME Action Plan*

27.4 Our BME Action Plan Coordinator has left post and the Action Plan is now being taken forward and mainstreamed across the work of colleagues in HR, Communications and the Equality Team.

### *Staff network activities*

- Our **BME staff network** hosted the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Public Sector BME Staff Networks.
- Our **Working Parent and Carer staff network** is undertaking a member survey to identify where improvements can be made to the processes of supporting working parents and carers.
- OUT-NAW, our **LGBT staff network**, marked International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and transphobia in May.

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### D. Financial Update

#### 28.0 2015–16 Financial position

28.1 Our 2015–16 corporate financial targets are to:

- a. take appropriate action to ensure the expenditure position at the end of the financial year is below 1% of the Commission's budget;
- b. deliver the actual expenditure to date within 2% of the planned budget profile;
- c. deliver £500k Value for Money (VfM) savings; and
- d. ensure our prompt payment performance remains within 10 days.

28.2 At the end of September 2015, the year–end position is forecast to be 2% underspent compared with the 1% target. This arises because some projects, which are dependent on access to certain areas of the estate, could need to phase their delivery over the financial year–end. This will have the effect of moving expenditure from the 2015–16 financial year into 2016–17. There is confidence that the target will still be achieved as there are other priority projects that can be accelerated for delivery before 31 March 2016.

28.3 We have achieved £136k of our £500k Value for Money savings target as at the end of September. Whilst the position is not as strong as the same period in the previous year (£318k), we still expect to achieve the £500k target during this transitional year. The previous year's target included the savings from vacant staff posts. We have not included such savings in this reporting period but we are still monitoring these.

#### *2016–17 Budget*

28.4 The 2016–17 budget was scrutinised by Finance Committee on 1 October and their report was published on 16 October 2015. The Finance Committee made six recommendations and these have all been accepted. The plenary debate on the budget took place on 11 November.

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- 28.5 The budget has been prepared to ensure the continuing delivery of high quality services, whilst maintaining stability as the transition to the Fifth Assembly takes place. The total budget is £52million and makes the following provisions:
- a. A 1.5% real terms cut to Commission funding (total funding £36.5million).
  - b. Fully funding the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances, in line with the changes made by the Remuneration Board, which take effect from the start of the Fifth Assembly (total estimated funding £15.5 million).
- 28.6 Now that the budget has been debated and approved, work will start to deliver budget allocations and delegation letters to Heads of Service in readiness for the start of the new financial year.

**Highlight Report to the Commission  
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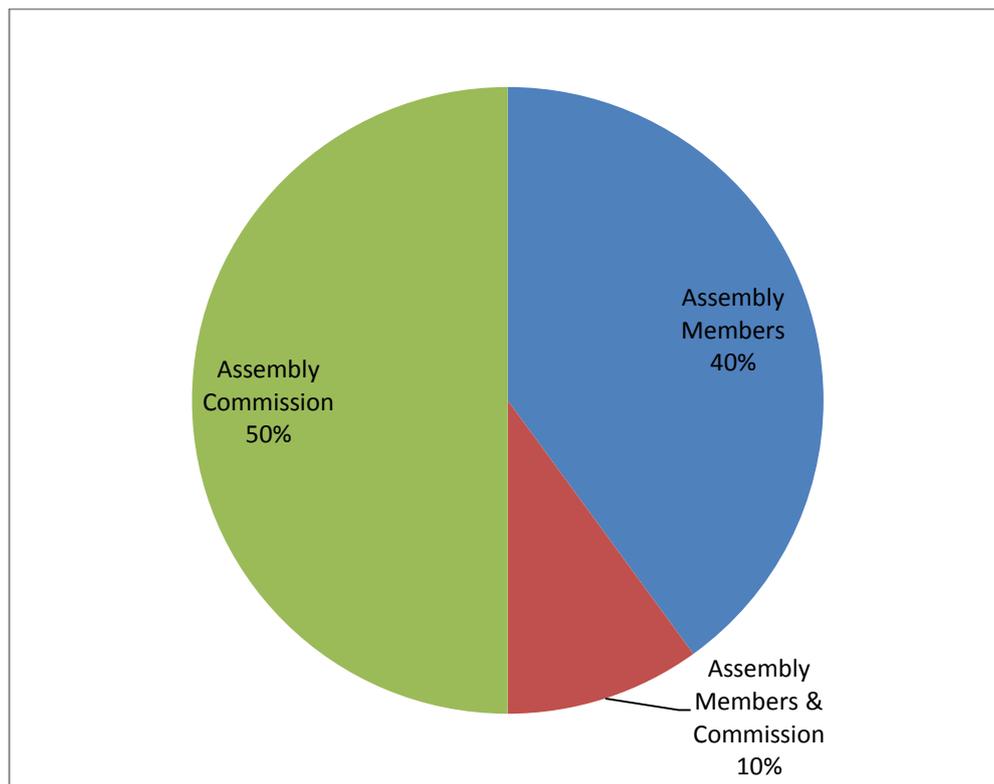
**E. Freedom of Information (FOI)**

**29.0 FOI requests for the period May to September 2015**

29.1 A list of information disclosed since the last report under the Freedom of Information Act is attached at Annex E. This has been categorised to indicate the subject matter of FOI requests in the period. The list also includes details of information withheld due to FOI exemptions, those that have been partially released and those where no information is held.

29.2 The chart below shows the 20 requests as they have been categorised. There were no time and cost exemptions applied.

**FOI requests by category (May to September 2015)**



Highlight Report to the Commission  
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## F. Annexes

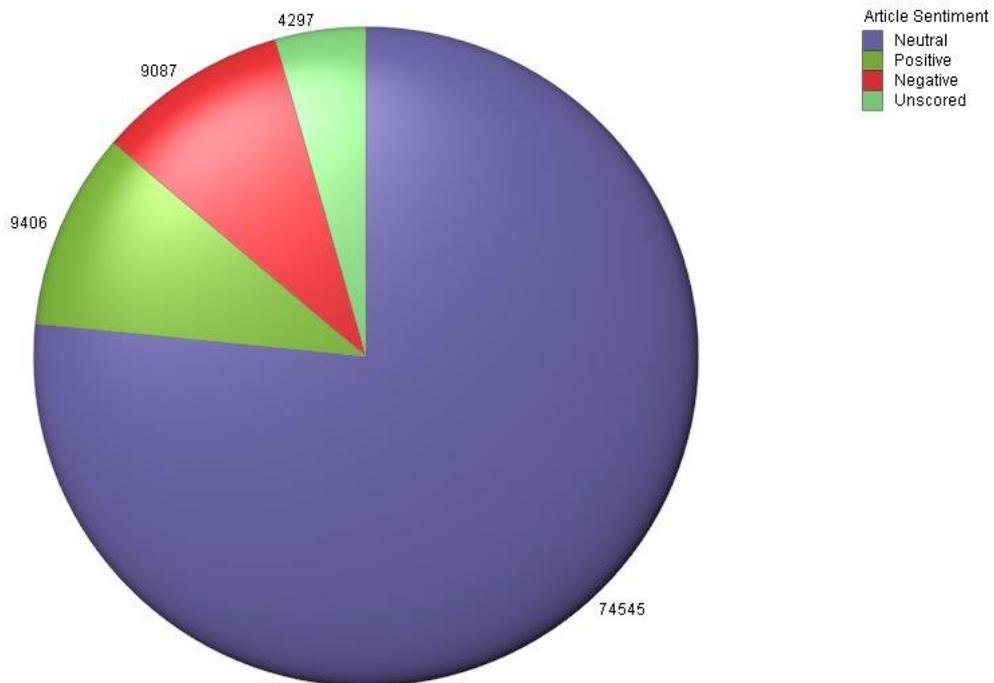
### Annex A – Examples of media covered received for Presiding Officer's and corporate events

Month	Description	Coverage
April	Assembly Commissioners' visit to Bosnia	Y Cymro, Pembrokeshire Herald, South Wales Argus
May	Assembly Marks VE Day	South Wales Evening Post, South Wales Argus, Carmarthen Journal
June	EU-Assembly Poll clash – coverage of PO's intervention	Wales Online, Western Mail, BBC Wales News website, Golwg 360
	Roll back of Powers– coverage of PO evidence to CLA Committee	Western Mail, Media Wales
July	Julia Gillard –POWiPL event	BBC Wales(TV, Web & Radio), ITV Wales, Western Mail/Wales Online, South Wales Echo, Huffington Post
	Srebrenica event	Golwg 360, south Wales Argus, South Wales Echo, DPO Essay in Western Mail, Daily Post
	Votes@16	BBC(radio, TV, web), ITV Wales, South Wales Argus, Pontypool Free Press, Swansea Sound, South Wales Evening Post, Golwg 360, Wrexham Leader, Western Mail, Daily Post, Newyddion, Real Radio, Heart FM, Capital Radio
Sept	#SeneddSwansea	Evening Post – inch articles each day in lead up to events and coverage of events during #SeneddSwansea week

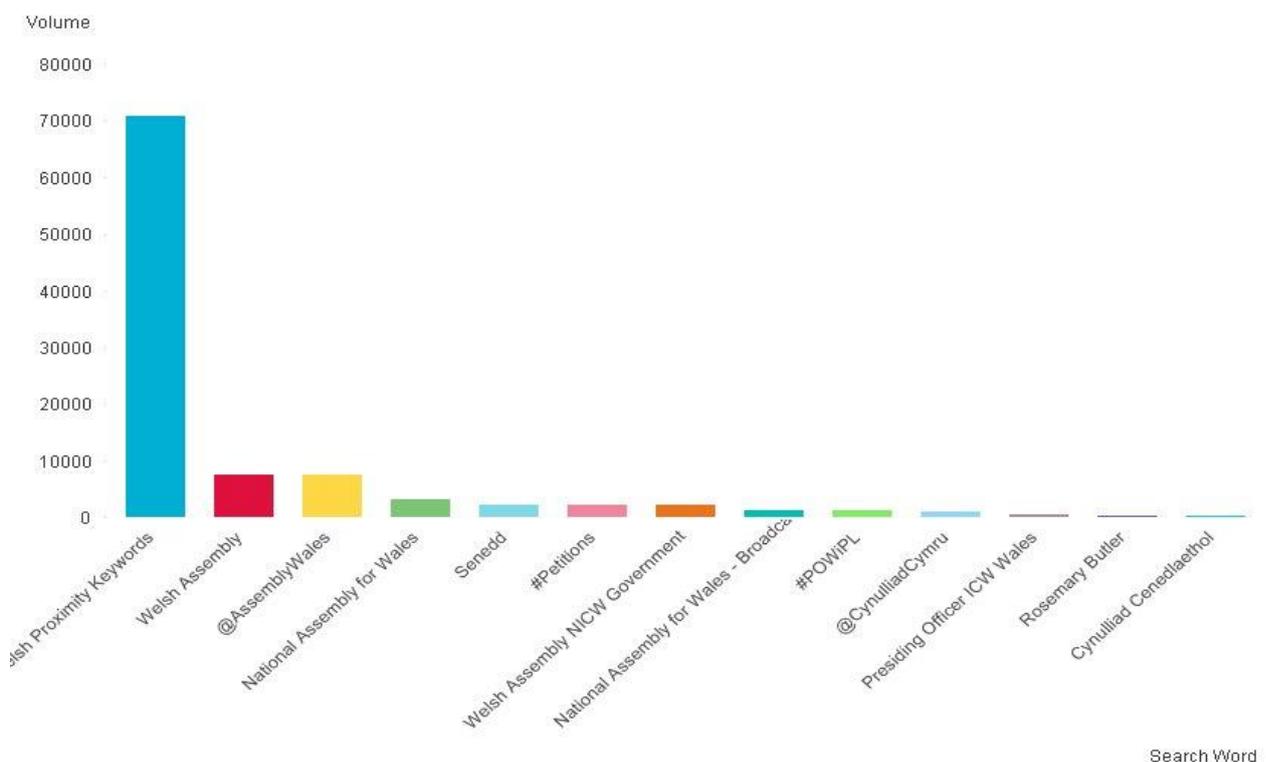
# Highlight Report to the Commission April - September 2015

## Annex B - Value of media work

The chart below shows the sentiment of the coverage we have received.

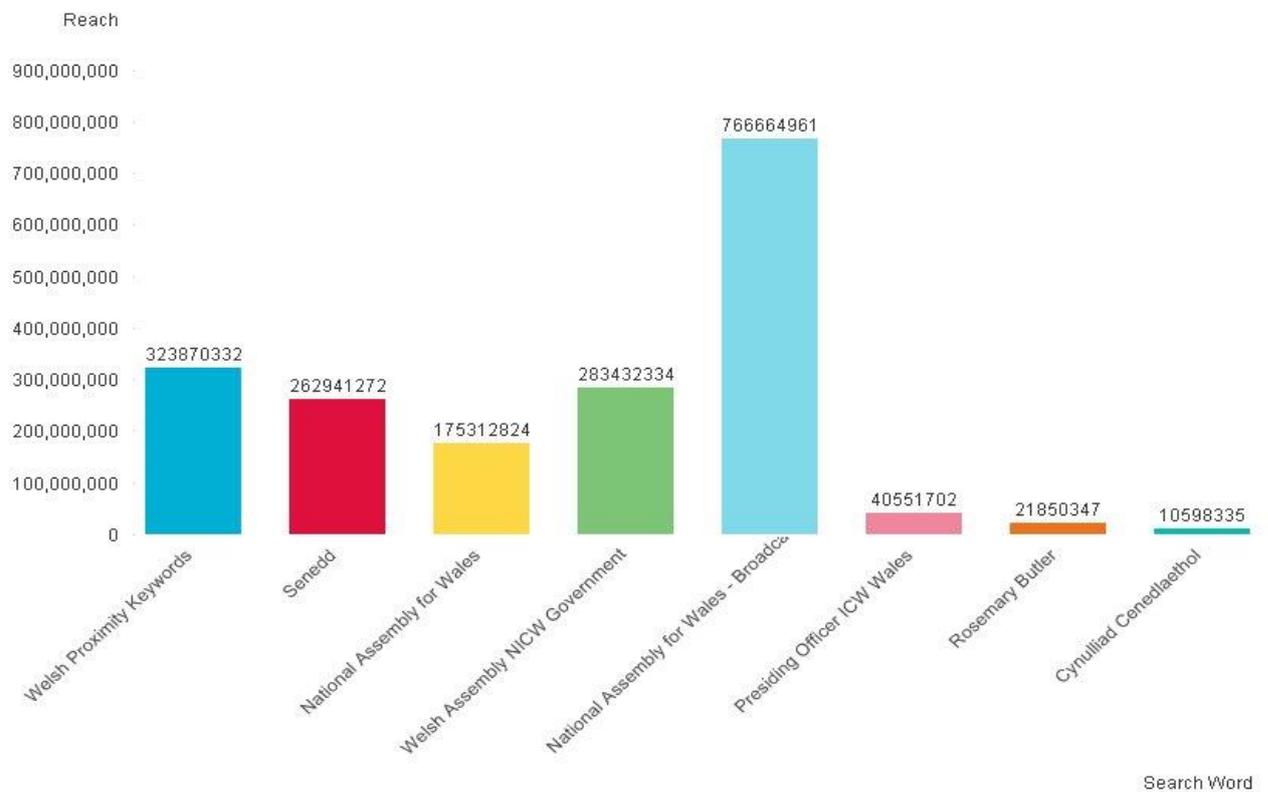


The chart below shows the amount of coverage, split by the specific terms.



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The chart below gives a flavour of the reach of our media work.



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**Annex C – Media activity by committee**

Month	Committee	Activity	Coverage
April	HSC	Ambulance services report	Walesonline, South Wales Echo, Penarth Times, BBC Wales, Daily Post
May	CELG	Local Government Bill – Stage 1 report	Public Sector Executive, Localgov.co.uk, Local Government Executive, South Wales Evening Post, Shropshire Star
May	Finance	Public Services Ombudsman	Public Service Magazine
May	HSC	Safe nurse staffing levels – Stage 1 report	Aberdare Online, South Wales Echo, Walesonline, South Wales Evening Post, BBC Wales, Daily Post, Nursing Times
May	EnS	Natural Resources Wales report	South Wales Argus
May	Finance	Collection and management of taxes	South Wales Argus, Public Finance Magazine
June	CELG	Poverty report	Huffington Post, Guardian, BBC, ITV, Walesonline, Western Mail, South Wales Echo, Evening Post
June	Petitions	Army recruitment in schools report	Western Telegraph, Milford Mercury, Daily Post
June	PAC	Road projects report	South Wales Evening Post, Swansea Sound, The Wave
June	CELG	Renting Homes Bill – Stage 1 report	Inside Housing
July	HSC	Regulation and Inspection of Social	South Wales Evening Post

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<b>Month</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Coverage</b>
		Care (Wales) Bill	
July	Petitions	Provision of defibrillators report	South Wales Argus
July	EnS	NRW report	Western Mail
July	PAC	Air link report	South Wales Echo, South Wales Argus, The Wave, Swansea Sound
July	PAC	Welfare reform	The Guardian, BBC Wales, Scottish Housing, Inside Housing
July	EnB	Employment opportunities for over-50s	The Guardian, BBC Wales, ITV Wales,
Aug	HSC	Alcohol and substance misuse report	South Wales Echo, Western Mail, Wales Online, Evening Post

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Annex D – Social media highlights

Platform	Description
Twitter	<p><b>Main Assembly Account</b></p> <p>English account now has <b>27,592</b> followers. A growth of <b>3,877</b> followers since April. <b>841</b> tweets were sent in this time. The best month for engagement was July.</p> <p>Welsh account now has <b>3,455</b> followers. A growth of <b>301</b> followers since April. <b>778</b> tweets were sent in this time. The best month for engagement was July.</p> <p><b>Content highlights:</b></p> <p>#AskFirstMin – Latest call out for questions for the Committee for Scrutiny of the First Minister on the topic of ‘Wales in the Wider World’ has gathered over <b>30</b> responses so far.</p> <p>#Vote16Wales – The report launch of Vote@16 was widely retweeted and the live tweeting hashtag for the conference trended in Wales. Included use of the first <u>Assembly Twitter GIF</u>.</p> <p><b>Other Twitter accounts</b></p> <p>All Assembly Twitter accounts have gained followers since April in both English and Welsh. @WomenofWales has the potential to reach <b>3,000</b> followers, @SeneddResearch is close to reaching <b>2,000</b> followers and @YourAssembly is nearing <b>1,500</b> followers.</p> <p>Majority of accounts are now using more images since the introduction of the Social Media Image Library. @YourAssembly has reached good engagement levels with the close of the Vote@16 campaign. The Health, Environment and Petitions Committees have also achieved good levels of engagement by promoting their online surveys. The @WomenofWales account got #POWiPL trending UK wide during the Julia Gillard lecture.</p>
Facebook	<p><b>Main Assembly Account</b></p> <p>The English account now has <b>2,313</b> likes; a growth of <b>234</b> likes since April. The most engagement took place in July.</p>

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	<p>The Welsh account now has <b>365</b> likes; a growth of <b>32</b> likes since April. The most engagement took place in June.</p> <p>The post with the biggest reach (<b>3.6K</b>) was a vacancy post for a trainee solicitor.</p> <p>The biggest non-vacancy post was a Research blog post about the Minister for Education harmonising school term dates (<b>1.9K</b>).</p> <p><b>Other Facebook accounts</b></p> <p>The Senedd Facebook account has now achieved more than 1000 likes.</p>
<b>YouTube</b>	<p><b>Main Assembly Channel</b></p> <p><b>8,760</b> views from April to September. That's down 4,195 from this time last year. However the average view duration has increased by <b>13 seconds</b> since this time year. <b>Top 3 Videos:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Votes@16 – Main Campaign Video;</li><li>2. Petition Video – The Future of Further Education; and</li><li>3. The Senedd – Video showing architecture of the Chamber.</li></ol>
<b>Wordpress</b>	<p><b>Main Assembly Blog</b></p> <p>English blog had <b>3,367</b> views from April to September, most views were in September. The top post was for the #AskFirstMin campaign which has become the top post for 2015.</p> <p>Welsh blog had <b>304</b> views from April to September, most views were in September. The top post was for the #AskFirstMin campaign which has become the top post for 2015.</p> <p><b>'In Brief' – Research Blog</b></p> <p>English blog – <b>36,820</b> views from April to September, most views were in July. Top post was one 'Introducing the Public Health (Wales) Bill'.</p> <p>Welsh blog – <b>2,888</b> views from April to September, most views were in June. Top post was 'Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales – Research Paper'.</p>

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<b>Instagram</b>	<p>Instagram has grown from less than 60 followers to <b>165</b>. More resource has been put to Instagram content as it has recently grown to have more platform users than Twitter. The Assembly mainly uses Instagram to promote the Senedd visitor brand.</p> <p>A recent video and a photo of the Senedd chamber from above have garnered over 60 likes combined.</p>
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**Highlight Report to the Commission  
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**Annex E – Freedom of Information requests**

May to September 2015

20 requests for information were received during the period May to September 2015. The categories are indicative of the nature of the request.

<b>1. Information released following access to information requests</b>	
Assembly Members	Number of support staff employed.
	Members' Research fund.
	Attendance at Plenary and Committee meetings. <b>This information is already available. Relied on section 21 (Information accessible by other means).</b>
	Donations to election campaigns. <b>This information is already available in the Register of Members' Interests and on the Electoral Commission website. Relied on section 21 (Information accessible by other means).</b>
Assembly Commission	Remuneration Board members. <b>Information contained in the annual report, to be published in the near future. Relied on section 22 (Information intended for future publication).</b>
	Copies of maternity and shared parental leave policies. <b>Released and relied on section 22 (Information intended for future publication).</b>
	Procurement information regarding computer maintenance contract.
	Departmental organisational chart.

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Assembly Members and Commission	Procurement of Apple Computers for Members and Assembly staff.
	Access to banned websites.
<b>2. Information held but not released</b>	
Assembly Commission	Internal recruitment exercise. <b>Relied on section 40 (Personal Data)</b>
<b>3. No information held</b>	
Assembly Members	Number of Welsh speakers.
	Discussion on lowering the voting age to 16 for the Assembly elections.
	Number of rejected and false expenses claims.
	Money invested by Ministerial Pension Fund.
Assembly Commission	Associated costs of Committees visiting Brussels.
	Public Service Ombudsman attendance at committees.
	Security incidents.
	LGBTI Catholics (claims of bullying and harassment).
	Number of migrants to be received by Wales.