

Bwrdd Taliadau Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol Cymru

—
Remuneration Board of the
National Assembly for Wales

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Board challenges parties and public to pick high quality candidates for Fifth Assembly

The independent Remuneration Board of the National Assembly for Wales has published its final decision for the remuneration and financial support for Members in the Fifth Assembly and a detailed report setting out its thinking.

It outlines the salaries and level of financial support that will be available to each Member to carry out their role as an AM after the election in 2016.

“Our Determination recognises the fact that after the 2016 election, the National Assembly will have become a markedly different and more significant institution than when originally established. It will have law-making, tax-setting and borrowing powers like those of the UK and Scottish parliaments. I believe the work the Board has done has produced a remuneration regime which is appropriate for the institution, and the increasing responsibilities which lie ahead,” said Sandy Blair, Chair of the Remuneration Board.

“Our duty is to ensure that there is financial support in place that attracts the best people to put their names forward for the role of Assembly Member and that support is available that enables elected Members to best perform their role in scrutinising legislation and the Welsh Government. Where we have found barriers that dissuade people from standing for election, we have tried to address them.

“We have played our part by providing a Determination which we believe is an investment in Welsh democracy – in the capacity and quality of the Assembly so that it is fit for purpose as more powers are devolved.

“Now the challenge moves to the political parties and Welsh public to ensure that the right candidates, who can deliver on the promise that these additional powers offer, are elected.”

The Determination includes an increase in the basic salary for Members of the new Assembly. From May 2016, the salary will be £64,000. At the same time, changes being made by the Board to the Members' pension scheme will reduce the contribution from taxpayers, and Members will contribute more.

Mr Blair added: "Some of the Board's decisions have attracted criticism from the public and Members. Others have been well received. The Board has listened to the feedback – positive or negative – and considered it in its deliberations.

"The Board's research clearly demonstrates that the job of being an Assembly Member has changed significantly since 2010, when the salary was last reviewed. We have set remuneration at a level to reflect the degree of responsibility that Members will carry."

The Board has also made changes, following consultation, to the way financial support is provided to party groups compared to the current system. The changes will ensure that the total spent on supporting all parties in the Assembly remains constant even if there are more than four parties in the next Assembly. With only 60 members, the contribution of every Member is vital.

Mr Blair added: "Party groups are crucial to the effective operation of the Assembly. Underpinning our determination in this regard has been the principle of shifting resources to opposition groups to encourage greater scrutiny of the Welsh Government.

"Greater powers for Welsh Ministers means that an increased level of scrutiny is necessary. That's why we have included new additional support for individuals who aren't in groups, to ensure every Member can contribute."

Notes

The full report can be downloaded here

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IID=11701>

The Board has confirmed that three decisions will be reviewed in January 2016: the rates for office costs and residential costs, plus the salary bands for Support Staff.

The total cost of the determination has increased during the Fourth Assembly and was £13.5m in 2014/15. This compares with a maximum cost estimate for 2014/15 of £14.9m.

It is estimated that the actual costs for 2016/17, the first year of the Fifth Assembly will be around £14.5m, (based on a maximum cost of £15.7m).

To arrange interviews, or for further information please contact

Gareth Price, Clerk to the Board, on 029 2089 8566.