

National Assembly for Wales Remuneration Board

Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly - Responses

	Response
1	<p>Dear Mr Blair,</p> <p>I would like to register my dismay at your proposals to pay AM's an extra £10,000 per annum. In these austere times such pay rises are unreasonable, unwarranted and unnecessary. This will come out of the publics pockets who are having their living standards diminshed. At times I wonder what planet people like you come from when making such stupid, ill-thought out decisions. You are so far removed from the real world that your decisions are completely unrelated to what the general public want and feel to be right and realistic. I would like you to explain you findings to me and justify your decision.</p>
2	<p>I was surprised and disappointed to hear that Welsh assembly members are to receive a large pay increase at a time when the pay for most private sector workers has been frozen for a log time and Council budgets are being cut - affecting many public services and rate payers. I have just seen the BBC News programme on television and it appears that this increase is being justified through a change of job role, brought about because more responsibility has been devolved from Westminster to Cardiff. If this is the case then some people within Westminster must have less responsibility, so will their job roles also be evaluated and their pay reduced by 10,000 per annum?</p> <p>Would it not be a much better idea to scrap the Welsh assembly and return all powers to Westminster, as it would save a lot of money and we might then receive the same higher level of healthcare, transport and education services as in England?</p>
3	<p>Dear Mr Blair,</p> <p>I am writing to express my total disagreement with your findings concerning the award of an increase of £10,000 for assembly members. I am shocked that this figure could even be arrived at in this time of austerity, for all it seems except assembly members</p> <p>My disbelief is several fold and I struggle to see how you arrived by this increase, in these times where public sector workers are having pay freezes or minimal pay rises, how such a large increase can be given or even affordable by the tax payers to people who at the end of the day are just public employees. I listened to your claim that the job structure has changed and a larger workload has been placed upon them, I am shocked that unlike other sectors which have have job cuts, worsening of conditions and due to staff cuts have had more responsibility and a larger workload placed upon them, with no sign of any increase for this.</p> <p>With so many jobs going in the public sector and the workload increases that come with it, I am confused as to why there have been no cuts to AM numbers but a willingness to increase numbers and also salaries</p>

	<p>The point I really struggle with this whole situation is why there is an independent body to look at the salary of AM's, when no other sector has this, and the people who make the decisions concern pay rises to public sector workers are themselves public sector workers, who get their own body to evaluate their pay scale. Why are they not restricted to the same pay and conditions as every other public sector workers, or if they do believe that their pay should be decided by an independent body then why are all other public sector workers pay not being assessed by an independent body, I get the feeling that the powers that be would hate to share their tax payers money tree with the rest of the workforce, anything to be aloof from the workforce, by any means fare or fowl</p> <p>I would like if possible your response to my points and for you to take them into consideration before this outrageous use of public funds is once again wasted</p>
4	<p>I have read the consultation document which sets out the proposed remuneration for the 5th assembly. I cannot see a response pro forma on your website (although the 'response to consultations....' documents on your website suggest that there is a pro forma) Please therefore accept my comments as follows:</p> <p>I do not agree that AM's pay should be linked to that of MPs - Wales as a whole is amongst the lowest income regions of the UK by most measures. For example, according to an article on Wales Online in November 2012, median pay in Wales was £19,216, compared with £30,471 for London. Given this difference, I feel that AM's pay should relate in some way to the median/average pay in Wales, not MPs' pay.</p> <p>Whilst I do not doubt the integrity of the Remuneration Board members, I feel that the Board should have at least some representation from voters/taxpayers in Wales in order to get a more rounded perspective in the decision making process.</p> <p>My comments are made from a personal perspective as a Welsh resident and voter.</p>
5	<p>It seems like a few extra thousands for the old pal`s pay packet,who in my opinion are over paid now.When I see them on t.v at the assembly most of them look bored and when some of them have to speak they struggle to put 2 sentences together and can`t wait to sit down again.Again in my opinion the only members who should get the extra money should be a minister in charge of a department,then the unused money could go to the people who really deserve a pay rise and I mean the NURSES.</p>
6	<p>I have today been hearing the news in respect of the possible pay award for our Welsh politicians and the comments that not many tax payers have been in contact with yourselves regarding this.</p> <p>Firstly, I would say that most tax payers would not be aware that they are able to contact yourselves to express their views in respect of any</p>

	<p>recommendations that are made in respect of pay. If this was the case, I would imagine that you would have received more communication from the average tax payer saying that they are not happy with the prospect of the politicians receiving an extra £10,000 in their pay packet.</p> <p>Secondly, I work within the public sector and you are using the fact that this is not a salary increase but an amount that they should be paid following job re-evaluation. There are many of us within the public sector that would like something similar to happen to us if we take on more and more extra work as has been stated, but sadly we are not that lucky. As you know in the public sector, we have to carry on working, getting requested to do more as they do not replace those that leave but our roles are not reviewed, so I do not feel that this pay award is justified. Also, with the health service and other public services being in much need of extra funds, the money would be best spent this way.</p> <p>We are currently going through austerity measures and feel that this is a slap in the face for the tax payer and should not be awarded.</p>
7	<p>Could you explain to me how you can endorse a £10,000 pay increase for assembly members pay, when staff such as myself working on the front line of the NHS taking on MORE responsibilities.</p> <p>However we have been subjected to a long term pay freeze, followed by a measly 1% pay increase. How on earth can you as a board justify this increase when we are seeing hardly any increase. Again this is just another insult to hard working public sector workers.</p> <p>Yours in objection.</p>
8	<p>I would like to register my view that AMs should not be awarded a pay rise. I understand that they undertake a very useful role in society but the current cuts in the public sector should be reflected by cutting AMs wages.</p>
9	<p>http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/66844220/law-to-change-on-mp-pay-rises</p>
10	<p>I would object most strongly to AM's increase in pay as Wales is still lagging behind other parts of the UK in most areas of commerce, industry and employment and the Wales health service is apparently in a awful state until these issues are resolved a pay rise can not be justified Regards</p>
11	<p>I am fully aware that the consultation has closed. I only became aware of this consultation having seen a news article today. I realise that this email will not be taken into account. However, part of the new article noted the limited objections you have received to your recommendations - and I feel compelled to make 2 points.</p> <p>Firstly, that you are naïve if you consider that limited responses to your consultation indicate agreement with your proposals. There is an irony that, at a time when public confidence in the political system is at such a low, that this is how you seek public opinion on your proposals. The BBC's crude poll seems to have been far more effective.</p>

	<p>Secondly, it is a slap in the face to the civil servants who to serve the AMs that you are effectively telling them that AMs deserve a 10% increase in their salary because of the new responsibilities that they will have in the 5th Assembly, when the exact same considerations apply to the civil servants who are tasked with actually delivering those responsibilities. Despite this, civil service salaries go down each year in real terms, and there is no sign of this changing. So go ahead and implement your proposals - you may well see an increase in the calibre of AMs, but you are getting a decrease in the calibre of the civil service in Wales. Which do you really think will have the most real effect on quality of public service delivery in Wales?</p> <p>I truly feel saddened.</p>
12	<p>I am writing to lodge my objection to the proposed pay increase being offered for assembly members. The award is outrageously excessive and shows a complete disregard for the many thousands of people that live and work in Wales and the rest of the UK who have had to endure either no pay increases or measly 1% pay awards over the last five plus years or more of imposed political austerity measures. Why are Assembly members worth a pay rise more than the 1 or 2% that everyone else has to put up with?</p> <p>Politicians only occasionally criticise Chief executives and Bankers over the ludicrous pay rises and bonuses they give themselves which the public condemn and abhor so vehemently and here you are, the remuneration board, awarding the same unfair, unjust and unnecessary awards to Assembly members who already earn a salary 3 to 4 times larger than the average 'common' hardworking person of this country.</p> <p>Many people in Wales and the UK as a whole, have to rely on food banks and hand-outs whilst suffering in abject poverty caused by wage compression, high taxes and low paid work instigated and allowed primarily by what can only be referred to as seriously inept individuals and political executives that most councils, assemblies and parliaments are riddled with. These same people are continually allowed by many of our failed national and local government politicians and councillors to continually squander and waste tax payers money, continually raise taxes such as council taxes way above the rate of inflation to cover the losses they stupidly make in their failed policies and mismanagement of budgets and these same inept people are never sacked or dismissed, but are instead shuffled into other highly paid positions in the little elite 'cliques' that exist within such establishments. It is a rare event indeed when anyone who fails the people so badly is ever held to account. I site the child abuse scandal at Rotherham and the new jobs the failed councillors have sidestepped into: all to do with child welfare on different councils. Outrageous.</p>

	<p>I find your decision to award such unjustified pay increases of 18.5% absolutely disgusting, unfair, and unnecessary. Virtually everybody in the UK would relish the opportunity to be paid over £50,000 per year salary and if Assembly members cannot live comfortably on their current salaries (paid for by taxpayers) then they have no right to be serving the public or their constituents in the Assembly in the first place. You cannot seriously argue that such a huge pay award is necessary or right when people are living on the streets of this country, not knowing when they are next going to get a hot meal!</p> <p>Expenses are already given to cover ancillary costs in being an Assembly member such as travel and accommodation etc and i see no viable justification for such an obscene pay increase to be awarded in the first place. Any honourable Assembly member should instantly object to this proposed salary increase and those that do not should be expelled from the assembly. The assembly should reject this proposal and if they have no power to veto your proposal they should implement emergency legislation to enable them to do so and also to sack the whole lot of you on the remuneration board for suggesting such a ludicrous and insulting pay rise award in the first place. Talk about being out of touch! Your entire board must have their heads up their backsides if you think this is a sensible thing to do in the current economic climate. Why on earth the Assembly agreed to you lot doing a grown ups job in the first place is beyond me?</p> <p>The Public already have a generally low opinion of governments and politicians and how they conduct themselves and if this pay rise goes ahead it will just show how endemically corrupt, self centred and arrogant our Politicians, governments and civil servants such as your remuneration board truly are.</p>
13	<p>I am writing to object to your recommendation to increase AM's salary by 10% clearly the committee are out of touch with the real world. To become a AM it should be seen as a honour and privilege not a career choice based on salary and perks. Your team just doesn't understand pride in the workplace, you only see how much remuneration we can achieve. I not only object to the salary increase I also object to your findings regarding AM's staff. Why are you still allowing AM's having multiple family members working in the AM's offices. The AM's should only be allowed to have ONE family member on full time on a salary appropriate to their workload and one researcher on a part time basis with a limit to the number of hours they can work. It must be shown that nepotism cannot be allowed in public office. It's incredible that some AM's have multiple family members (up to 4) working for them. I also object to your committee calling your selves independent. Looking at your cv's you are all very knowledgable but clearly on this document not independent.</p>
14	<p>I strongly disagree with the assembly members being given a pay rise of £10,000. At a time of financial stringency this is an appalling waste of public money. Assembly members are sufficiently remunerated at present. The money would be better spent improving public services –</p>

	<p>particularly the health service. The Assembly is a terrible waste of money already – to pay them more would be scandalous.</p>
15	<p>I would like to object to the proposed increase in AM's salaries to £64000pa. I understand there is an increase in workloads but there is also to be an increased number of AMs to deal with this, so it is difficult to understand why there should be an increase in both numbers and salary paid.</p> <p>I would be grateful if you could acknowledge this comments and take it into consideration.</p> <p>Regards</p>
16	<p>I wish to voice my strong objection regarding the above. As a hardworking, dedicated teacher inundated with extra workload brought on by the Welsh Assembly, a teacher who has not received a pay rise for many years but STILL does an excellent job, I think it is unfair if AMs accept a pay rise at all! They should be leading by example if they wish to have the respect of the nation. The argument of not being able to attract good AMs without this enormous increment is ridiculous. We need to attract excellent teachers, doctors and nurses too but we never see a ten thousand pound pay rise being recommended for them.</p> <p>I look forward to a personalised response rather than a standardised reply.</p> <p>Regards,</p>
17	<p>I see from listening to the news you believe that because not many people have commented officially about increasing AM's pay by £10000 per year then you are good to still go for it.</p> <p>I think if you were to do any surveying at all you would be very surprised. If public service employees are expected to live with 1% rises then AM's certainly do not deserve any more than that. I would rather see the whole scheme shut down than keep throwing more and more public money at it.</p> <p>Second response from respondent:</p> <p>Thank you for your reply. I am sure you will not wish to get into a debate with me about this issue but I feel a response is more than justified. I note you have been involved in several paid public appointments over the years. Despite that your paragraph under “we also considered” makes me wish to challenge, perhaps, your basic presumption. You base your argument on the fact that powers and responsibilities are increasing substantially. Surely responsibility only comes with liability? As, unless the law is broken, none of these people have any responsibility ultimately. If they resign nothing can be done about their actions whilst employed. So until public servants are properly accountable for their actions then I would argue they are not properly responsible.</p>

	<p>I am constantly amazed how often I see how easily some people disburse monies and wonder if they would act the same if it were their monies they were dealing with. Your suggestion of a £10,000 increase is inflationary and probably holds the key to how public service wages have increased so much over the last decade or two. I am sure I don't need to specify examples as you will know very well how wages have changed over that period.</p> <p>So, whilst my original missive was emotive, this is a more considered approach. All these rises have knock on effects that add massively to the already overburdened public expenditure. That really must be curbed and it seems to me that you, and others in similar jobs, are in just the ideal position to have a positive effect on that.</p>
18	<p>I would like to object to the proposed pay increase for AM's The public should decide the pay rise that any public servant gets,if any at all during these sad time of public cuts and public job loses</p> <p>Disappointed</p>
19	<p>I am writing to enquire about the recent announcement about 18.5% pay increases for assembly members. Please can you give me further information on how this is justified?</p> <p>I am enquiring as a tax payer and a teacher. I recently received a 7% increase based on a salary of less than £30000 a year as I have been fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to be part of a school senior leadership team. My role now evolves working a 70 hour week during term time and normal 37 hours a week during the holidays.</p> <p>I am tasked with supporting the head teacher to lead a school of at least 7 teachers, support staff and over 200 children to deliver and learn in maths. This is a huge responsibility, which I take seriously and strive to do my best for everyone I work with.</p> <p>On top of this responsibly I teach each day, not just 4 lessons including maths, English, science and other topic work but social skills and conflict resolution. I also run it club, homework club and gardening club to offer the children opportunities they don't get anywhere else.</p> <p>I love my job but when we get that imminent dreaded phone call from Estyn that they are coming to say what we should be doing better and make all staff feel they are not doing their best it's hard to carry on. But most of us do because we do it for the children that we think of as our own from 8.50 until 3.30 each day.</p>

	<p>Again I ask, how can this pay rise be justified when budgets for schools are cut (basic resources like photocopying and paper are monitored) other people charged with education, health and fire rescue are told there are pay freezes and changes in pension rights because of the state of the economy?</p>
20	<p>Complaint details: £10000 pay rise for AM's is absolutely disgusting! When I hear justification such as '...their workload has increased...' From Sandy Blair, does he realise how deeply insulting this comment is? I work for the public sector, I can't remember the last time I had a pay rise. You are seriously out of touch.</p>
21	<p>Sent to Jeff Cuthbert I note that the £10,000 increase for AMs has not gone away. I realise you are stepping down however I trust you object to this obscene increase that the remuneration board has plucked out of the air. For many years the public sector have restricted increases for their staff. Everyone has had to take on more work with no increase in wages . Everyone has had to take on more responsibility without extra remuneration. This is a fact that cannot be denied by anyone. This it seems does not apply to AMs.who are a special case? The case put forward by the remuneration board is very weak and in someways is based on extra workload that AMs will be taking on however,no mention had been made regarding any increase in wages for the extra work that the general staff at the assembly will have to take on. A case yet again of double standards. More for us but nothing for you. Before you leave make a stand for common sense on this matter. Do your utmost to prevent this massive increase.</p>
22	<p>Sir, In my opinion you are an idiot and completely out of touch with realism.</p> <p>To award AM,s a £10,000 per annum pay rise in this period of austerity is an insult to National Health Service workers in Wales who are only going to get a 1% pay rise, not in 2015 but 2016.</p> <p>On TV's you said by increasing AM,s pay it would attract more qualified people to stand for election. Clearly you do not understand party politics. For example a candidate is chosen by a political party to stand for election and in a Labour stronghold, you could put up a donkey</p>

	<p>with a red rosette on it and it would probably get elected. I am going to try and investigate how you came to be appointed to your post on the Independent Remuneration Board and what salary you are paid, unless of course you are prepared to reveal that information to me.</p>
23	<p>(Sent by FM office) I have been re directed to you after contacting first minister CARWYN JONES. I am seeking information with regard to the reported £10000 salary increase to be awarded to members of the welsh assembly. This award , on top of as I understand, a £57000 pay package seems particularly generous in consideration that here in Cardiff there exists a climate of cuts, cuts ,cuts. I would ,if possible like to know what event, or events occurred that would justify a seemingly large sum of taxpayers money(some of whom earn minimum wage) being awarded without the input of the citizens of wales. With consideration of the present and ongoing cuts to services to welsh citizens, was not a pay cut of say 2 or 3 percent considered? I do accept that assembly members bear a burden of responsibility to the welsh electors and that members give their best efforts, however ,I feel that on balance , this reported pay increase cannot be justified.</p>
24	<p>After watching the news this evening I have to say that as a tax paying North Wales resident I am absolutely disgusted that consideration is being given to increase salaries by £10,000. Whether it is called a pay rise or not I can assure you that in my opinion this money would be better spent on our emergency services. How can you possibly even think this consideration is a good idea when 99% of working members of public have not had or are likely to receive any kind of pay rise. Should you not be leading by example & put this proposed amount to something a lot more worthwhile.</p> <p>Finally, one of the assembly members themselves stated on television that their pay is currently enough so how can you think that what they do should be so much more highly paid than the men & women who go out there day after day to keep us safe & healthy?!?!</p>

25

Dear Sir,

I was disappointed when I heard on the BBC news on Saturday that the Welsh Assembly are about to award the AMs a £10,000 annual pay rise.

I am sorry but I do not think they are worth it.

If you suggested that you wanted to reduce their salaries then I would agree.

My reason is that they are behaving more like Glamorgan councillors rather than Welsh AMs and should be paid as councillors.

I live in North East Wales.

- We have one of two major European routes in Wales (A494/A550/A55), the other is the M4 in South Wales. The Department of Transport have upgraded the M56/A494/A550 which leads to the A494/A550/A55 in Wales. The English road is three lanes and is straight whereas the connecting Welsh one is only two lanes and twisting. When I asked my AM she said that the Welsh Assembly was looking at it but the English have looked and built. In the meantime South East Wales (Glamorgan) currently has six major road improvements ongoing.
- The railway line from Wrexham to Chester and Wrexham to Shrewsbury was due to be upgraded but the Welsh Assembly reallocated the money to the Valleys (Glamorgan) railway line.
- A few years ago the Welsh Assembly announced that there would be two Brain units in Wales: Cardiff and Swansea (Glamorgan). My father-in-law had a brain haemorrhage and was sent from Wrexham to Liverpool and survived the hour's journey. He would have died if he had had to go to a hospital in Glamorgan. I wrote and protested. It turned out that the health minister was from Swansea and did not want her constituents to lose out to Cardiff.

I have recently had another increase in council tax. We have had an increase every year since the Welsh Assembly started. Perhaps it is the problem and should be disbanded? As a rate payer I was better being ruled from Westminster.

You want to give them a pay rise but please remember that there will be an increase in their final salary pension.

Why not stop paying a final salary pension to the AMs and other Public Sector workers? A precedent was set by the Labour Government when they came into office in 1997 when they withdrew an agreed tax concession to final salary pensioners in private schemes. This resulted in the private sector firms stopping their final salary pension schemes and neither the Labour Government nor the Unions did anything to stop them. I find it galling that I have to pay towards other's final salary schemes when I have had mine stopped.

If you withdraw the final salary scheme then the public sector workers will have to rely on a money purchase pension scheme like the rest of us.

Dear Mr. Blair,

Subject: Complaint about the apparent superficiality of
Consultation arrangements and processes which have informed
the Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly.

I have just received a copy of the relevant report courtesy of your Clerk which I requested following my shock discovery from BBC Wales News item about a week ago that it was proposed to increase Members remuneration to a level far above reality for most working people and taxpayers in general.

I make no attempt to temper my comments with your supposedly reasoned arguments of 'justification', since your proposals do not sit with what should be a responsible and affordable base criteria for such determinations, not least because of public sufferance in this climate of austerity. I perceive a kind of audacity and pomposity if not arrogance which offends me in your deliberations.

Having been long retired from over 30 years in the civil service and being of an age where I can usefully employ some 'wisdom', I can assure you that there is considerable public displeasure (to put it mildly) about your proposals such as they are understood by the public. A position which has been seriously and undemocratically hindered by your ineffective and inadequate 'consultation' arrangements.

Out of a potential two and a half million registered electors in Wales, you have contented yourselves with a grand total of 64 responses. What a disgrace, what an absurdity, to a point which renders draft determination INVALID.

I could use many pages to 'pick holes' in your report but in the public interest I must focus on the serious weaknesses in the supposed consultation which has damaged opportunities for all of the people of Wales to become aware of what was being 'sneaked through' (a cynical but understandable and popular public perception) and grossly inadequate arrangements for gathering up their views.

As is often the case in this new age of technology, you probably have fallen into the trap of assuming that if the public need to know anything, they may come upon it on the internet but of the many users in my acquaintance, I have not met one who was made aware of the consultation through this medium. Similarly, I have talked to many people in my locality who like me, have not seen or heard any TV/radio programme other than the one which appeared in the news which I mentioned earlier., have not seen any posters, flyers, handouts, mail shots or press articles in local newspapers.

Your office has agreed to provide me with a list of your publicity/communications activities and however comprehensive you may feel this is, the fact remains that you have failed miserably to inform and gather public views and comment. However, this has clearly not prevented or hindered your objectives and determination to press ahead your untimely deliberations setting aside your awareness of bitter public animosity.

Please provide me with prompt acknowledgement and follow with your comments in due course.

Dear Miss Clancy,

Subject: Remuneration Board of the National Assembly for Wales
Report on the Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly
Complaint regarding poor public engagement during
Consultations.

Please find enclosed copy of my letter to the Remuneration Board Chair, which I trust will be of interest and concern to you.

I am aware of the independent and autonomous status of the Board but feel that some sort of Urgent intervention to advise or suggest some form of remedial action by the Board to placate public feeling, would be appropriate.

Given the finality of the public response date of 8th April 2015, together with the clear lack of public awareness and engagement expressed in my letter to the Board, I feel that there is an urgent case for public announcements (multi-media) to remind the people of Wales that they have little time left to express views or concerns regarding the highly sensitive and controversial proposals by the Board.

I have in mind a simple, clear and brief form of public announcement similar to the following:

"YOUR LAST CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE PROPOSED
PAY INCREASES FOR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS.
LAST RESPONSE DAY IS 8th APRIL 2015
CONTACT THE PAY BODY NOW ON 0300 200 6330"

I have copied my complaint to the Board together with this letter to you, to the First Minister in the hope that you will collaborate in making representations to the Remuneration Board along the lines of my suggestion.

I need hardly remind you that we are in an election year with further Assembly Elections next year with emotive issues continuing to fuel voter disenchantment.

Clearly, the Boards' consultation' arrangements have failed but in my experience the public often need continuous 'drip feeding' of information (a) to raise and sustain initial awareness, (b) to stimulate interest and (c) to solicit views and comment. Whilst this may be indicative of the public's short memory span conversely they have long memories at the ballot box.

I hope to hear from you soon with your comments. Please arrange prompt acknowledgement of this correspondence.

26	<p>Phone call:</p> <p>Mrs Coleman called on 17 March 2015. She chose not to write a response to the Board. Instead she requested to air her views verbally. The following is a summary of her comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't justify proposals for increase in salary in current climate of austerity. • Assembly Government has not delivered – poor NHS, failing airport, poor schools, 18 months to get a dentist. • Questioned whether Assembly Members are worth a salary at all. Questioned the value of the Assembly. • Many in public and private sector have not received a pay rise in years – how can this be justified for Assembly Members? • Assembly Members are not accessible. • Could not justify an increase in number of Assembly Members. That would mean that there would be more members taking a higher wage.
27	<p>There have been few, if any, Assembly Members who have left their position citing lack of pay as the cause.</p> <p>There is no shortage of prospective candidates for the next election.</p> <p>All parties would assure the electorate of the quality of their candidates.</p> <p>AMs represent smaller constituencies and far fewer constituents than Members of Parliament.</p> <p>AMs have authority for only a fraction of the areas of responsibility for the governance of the region.</p> <p>It is, unfortunately, all too apparent that for those areas for which they have been delegated authority e.g. NHS, education, AMs</p>

	<p>have demonstrated an appalling lack of competence to the extent that Wales increasingly lags behind a badly performing UK</p> <p>AMs are well paid by comparison with the majority of people living in the region.</p> <p>There is no possible justification, either market forces, job comparison or performance based for giving our self-seeking lower tier politicians ANY increase whatsoever and a strong argument could be made for reducing their pay.</p>
28	<p>Thank you for the invitation to comment on the current remuneration proposals.</p> <p>I am not persuaded by your reasons for a "revaluation" of AM's remuneration. As public sector employees they should be subject to the same strict rules as everyone else regarding pay. Public sector employees seeking pay rises are often told that they knew the pay when they took the job.</p> <p>This is a favourite tactic of public sector employers and it applies equally to AMs.</p> <p>I know one clerical worker in the NHS whose manager retired and was not replaced. This worker is now required to do much of the work previously done by the retired manager. Was the job revalued? Not a chance! Not a single penny extra for the extra work and responsibility.</p> <p>Please don't continue to insult us by using the term "revaluation", it's a pay rise!</p> <p>I would be grateful to know what mechanism is in place for the removal of the Board by us, their employers.</p> <p>I look forward to your response.</p>
29	<p>The proposed remuneration for AMs from 2016 seems neither logical nor justified by the evidence offered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It presumes that the present level from which increases are proposed to be made is the appropriate one 2. No provision is made for a reduction in level if - as political pressures insist - the number of AMs is increased to meet a supposed increase in duties

	<p>3. Little attempt is made to assess the effectiveness of the present number, calibre and achievements of AMs to justify the present level of payment on which the increase is based.</p> <p>4. Despite assertions, a precise comparison with remuneration in other UK assemblies is not provided.</p>
30	<p>The Remuneration Board has recommended a basic pay increase of 18% or £10,000, for Assembly Members in 2016. When, concurrently, the Assembly has restricted pay rises to 1% for Public Sector workers.</p> <p>To recommend a pay rise of such an amount is insensitive in the present economic climate.</p> <p>In November 14, Margaret Thomas, UNISON Cymru/Wales Secretary, said:</p> <p>"A £10,000 pay rise for Assembly Members cannot be justified, particularly when you take into account the struggle that so many working people are experiencing day in and day out."</p> <p>Furthermore, the public and private sector workers will claim a similar increase, if the Assembly fails to reject this increase.</p> <p>However, the Remuneration Board could implement a much more modest and phased introduction of this pay recommendation.</p>
31	<p>Phone call:</p> <p>"The Welsh Government should show by example by closing the gap between ordinary person in the street and top earnings."</p> <p>She also felt there hadn't been enough publicity about the increase, and was intrigued to hear that not all Members take their full allowance.</p> <p>We also discussed the work of the Board and she was reassured that the Government weren't setting their own pay.</p>
32	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I understand that comments are invited on the suggestion/proposal that assembly Members salaries be increased by £10,000pa. In my opinion</p>

	such largesse, at this time of hardship for many people, cannot be countenanced.
Response from Assembly Groups (to prevent repetition, specific points on Group Support have been extracted from the following responses and included in the Group Support paper (Paper 3))	
33	<p>Response from Plaid Cymru – AMSS:</p> <p>Comments focus on overall group support and also the impact on group support of entering government as a junior partner.</p>
34	<p>PROPOSED DETERMINATION FOR THE FIFTH ASSEMBLY Labour Group response April 2015</p> <p>Members’ Remuneration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Labour Group made it clear in our previous submission that we do not support the level of the Board’s proposed increase in the base salary of Assembly Members and method of determining this, given the extremely difficult financial situation faced by many of our constituents. 2. We stand by this view and would urge the Board to reflect very carefully on the “clear public view” and opposition from across the political spectrum to its initial proposals on AM salaries. 3. Your proposed increases in the additional salaries awarded to all opposition group leaders is also unacceptable. 4. We strongly believe that additional office holder salaries should be limited to Welsh government roles, the Assembly roles listed and the Leader of the official opposition, i.e. the leader of the largest opposition group. 5. The leaders of the other groups are, in our view, political appointments by their respective parties. It is our view that these party political roles should not qualify them for additional payments using tax payers’ money. 6. Limiting these additional leader payments to the leader of the official opposition would make for a simpler, fairer system which would also have the benefit of saving a significant sum of money that could be re-allocated to the group support budget, for example, which the Board claims could be under pressure in the next Assembly. 7. In terms of the Board’s proposals on Members’ pensions, we note that these are detrimental to the provision which Members were led to believe they would receive when they were elected. 8. We would urge the Board to continue its discussions with the Assembly’s Pensions Trustees. 9. We also urge the Board to provide urgent clarification regarding Members who are older than 65 who are standing again but wish to draw

down their pension. We understand that Members have been advised that this is not possible under the scheme. If this is the case, we believe that this is discriminatory to Members in this situation.

Office costs and support for Assembly Members

10. While the Labour Group welcomes some of the additional flexibility outlined in the Draft Determination, we believe that the Board needs to ensure that Members have the maximum level of flexibility possible with regards to office costs and staffing allowances.

11. Given factors such as widely fluctuating office rental costs, utility prices and the pressures of increasing workloads on already stretched staff, we would repeat our call for additional flexibility to transfer surplus funding from the office costs budget to the staffing budget.

35 Welsh Liberal Democrat Group Response to the Remuneration Board: Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your proposals for the Fifth Assembly. This response is submitted on behalf of the Welsh Liberal Democrat group. In answer to the specific proposals outlined:

Chapter 1 - Introduction and Principles of Financial Support.

We completely agree that equality must be a guiding principle for the Board and indeed the Assembly in general, and welcome the steps taken to ensure there are no unintended consequences as a result of this determination.

Chapter 2: Rules for submission of claims

We note that no substantial changes are proposed here.

Chapter 3: Members' Remuneration.

As we made clear in our submission to the consultation on remuneration, we cannot accept that given the current financial circumstance such an increase for AMs increase is warranted.

As we made clear then, we appreciate the work that was put into recognising and assessing the extra responsibilities that have been and will be handed down to the Assembly. The workload of Assembly Members and their staff has increased and the increase in legislation being made has meant that higher levels of scrutiny are required.

However, we also mentioned previously the study by Bangor University into barriers for entry which was referred to in the consultation. The report which stated that "there was a general consensus among participants that the salary is reasonable and fair" did not, in our opinion, lend itself to the conclusion that a substantial increase in salary was called for in order to attract new AMs.

We are, therefore, disappointed that the Board has ignored concerns in this area. Regarding pensions we are, as we have previously indicated, broadly content with the Board's proposals in relation to Members' pensions.

	<p>Chapter 4: Residential Accommodation Expenditure As per our previous consultation response, we are in agreement with the Board’s proposals. Draft Determination for the Fifth Assembly. WLD response. April 2015.</p> <p>Chapter 5: Members’ Travel We are in agreement with the proposals in this Chapter.</p> <p>Chapter 6: Office Costs We are in agreement with the proposals in this Chapter.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Support for Assembly Members We indicated in our previous responses that we were broadly supportive of the measures suggested here and particularly welcome the death in service and redundancy changes which will give a fairer deal for support staff. We are pleased to see that steps have already been taken regarding the introduction of these benefits.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Members Leaving Office. We accept the Board’s determination with regard to this.</p>
36	<p>Welsh Conservative Group Office Comments focus on overall group support.</p>

Sandy Blair CBE DL
Chair of the Remuneration Board
National Assembly for Wales
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-613

23 March 2015

Dear

You may be aware that the Petitions Committee has received the following petition from David Swain, which is currently collecting signatures:

P-04-613 AMs Should Reject Recommendation for a 18% payrise

With those working on the frontline in the public sector having pay cuts in real terms, I urge AM's to reject recommendations to increase their pay by 18%. By accepting this or any pay rise whilst the vast majority of public sector workers are faced with pay cuts and redundancies AM's would be communicating to those that they represent a message of "'We're alright Jack, keep your hands off my stack' (Money, Pink Floyd), with their "stack" being paid for by public sector cuts, pay freezes and redundancies. I would propose that AM's pay rise, freeze and cuts mirror those working in education, NHS, Police and social services.

In advance of our first consideration of any petition, it is our customary practice to write to the relevant Welsh Minister, seeking their views on the issues raised by that petition. Given the subject matter in this instance, the Committee wrote to Dame Rosemary Butler AM, as Chair of the Assembly Commission, to seek her views on the issues raised. Her response is enclosed for your information (below)

To assist the Committee's consideration of this petition, as suggested by the Presiding Officer, we would be grateful for your views on the matters raised by the petitioner.

Please forward your response to the Clerking Team at:

SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales

Yours sincerely

William Powell AC / AM

Cadeirydd / Chair

Enc: 18.03.15 Correspondence - Presiding Officer to Chair.

Y Fonesig Rosemary Butler AC
Dame Rosemary Butler AM


Llywydd
Presiding Officer


William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: PO975/RB

18 March 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January received 10 March.

The issue to which you refer is a decision made by a Board that was set up to be independent of the National Assembly for Wales, and me as Chair of the Assembly Commission. I would therefore refer you to Sandy Blair, Chair of the Remuneration Board, at Remuneration.Board@assembly.wales.

Rosemary

Dame Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer