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Creating a Parliament for Wales: Summary of the main findings
1. BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION
The Wales Act 2017 gave the National Assembly the power to make decisions in relation to the Assembly’s own size, electoral system and internal arrangements.

The independent Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, appointed by the Llywydd to advise the Assembly Commission on the number of Members the Assembly needs, the most suitable electoral system and the minimum voting age for Assembly elections, published its report *A Parliament that Works for Wales* in December 2017. The Expert Panel considered the National Assembly’s capacity to deliver for the people of Wales, and concluded that with only 60 Members the Assembly is too small to carry out its functions effectively. It recommended an increase to the number of Assembly Members and a number of changes to the Assembly’s electoral arrangements.

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1 Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, *A Parliament that Works for Wales*, December 2017
The Assembly Commission consulted the people of Wales between 12 February and 6 April 2018 on the Expert Panel’s recommendations, and on other reforms to the Assembly’s electoral and operational arrangements that could make the institution a more accessible and effective legislature.

The full background to the consultation, including the Expert Panel report, is available at [www.assembly.wales/futuresenedd](http://www.assembly.wales/futuresenedd).

This summary outlines headline findings from key elements of the consultation. A full consultation report will be published in autumn 2018.
2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS
To raise awareness of the consultation, engage with the public and stakeholders, and make it as easy as possible for people to respond, we:

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

We provided a series of different online surveys to give people the choice to respond to all of the issues covered in the consultation or to specific issues of interest to them. For the purpose of analysis, all responses have been collated. This includes the online survey responses, consultation response forms, Easy Read response forms, emails and other correspondence.
We received over 3,200 consultation submissions, the majority through the online surveys. Respondents were able to respond to the consultation more than once, for example by responding to more than one of the issue-specific online surveys. For this reason, the 3,200 submissions cannot be directly equated to 3,200 separate respondents. However, analysis of the consultation responses suggests that only a small number of respondents completed more than one online survey.

Of the 3,200 submissions:

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

The numbers of responses shown in the findings include all responses from individuals and organisations, and have been rounded to the nearest ten. Percentages do not always add up to exactly 100 as they have been calculated using the actual number of responses and then rounded to the nearest complete one percent.

The consultation included both multiple choice and open questions. Responses to open questions were grouped according to views expressed or themes raised. We then calculated the percentage of the responses to each open question which fell within the thematic groups. The report outlines the most commonly-raised views and themes only. These percentages do not, therefore, always add up to 100.
Creating a Parliament for Wales: Summary of the main findings
3. KEY FINDINGS
How many Members does the Assembly need?

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

Of the 1,830 responses to questions on the number of Members the Assembly needs, 56 per cent (1,030) were in favour of more Assembly Members, 39 per cent (710) were against this proposal and 5 per cent (90) were unsure or did not express a preference.²

**Figure 1: Views on the Expert Panel’s recommendation that there should be more Assembly Members³**

- More Assembly Members (1,030) - 56%
- No more Assembly Members (710) - 39%
- Don’t know/not sure/no clear preference (90) - 5%

² The total number of responses to consultation questions shown here and elsewhere in this report include all responses from individuals and organisations. The figures shown in brackets are the numbers of responses that gave a specified answer, expressed a specified view or raised a specified issue. All figures relating to the number of responses received have been rounded to the nearest ten. Percentages have been calculated using the actual number of responses rounded to the nearest complete one per cent. As a result the number of responses do not always add up exactly to the total and the percentages do not always add up to exactly 100.

³ The charts in this document show the number and percentage of responses who gave a specified answer to each question.
How many Members does the Assembly need?

A majority of the organisations that responded to the consultation supported an increase in the size of the Assembly.⁴

95 per cent (980) of those in favour of the proposal to increase the number of Assembly Members agreed with the Panel’s recommendation of an increase to between 80 and 90 Members.⁵ 4 per cent (40) of responses suggested more than 90 Members and 1 per cent (10) suggested between 61-79 Members.

![Figure 2: The number of Members the Assembly needs according to those in support of a larger Assembly](chart)

The main reasons given for supporting an increase in the size of the Assembly were:

- More effective representation.
- Greater diversity and range of views, and a stronger voice for Wales.
- Better scrutiny of the Welsh Government.
- Better debates, policy and legislation.
- Greater accountability.

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⁴ As noted above, responses provided by organisations are included in the total number of responses to consultation questions noted in this report.

⁵ Currently there are 60 Assembly Members.
How many Members does the Assembly need?

Of those opposed to increasing the size of the Assembly, 68 per cent (480) did not suggest an appropriate number of Assembly Members. 13 per cent (90) of those opposed to an increase wanted the number of Members kept at 60, 9 per cent (60) wanted fewer than 60 Members and 10 per cent (70) wanted the Assembly to be abolished altogether.\(^6\)

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

The main reasons given for opposing an increase in the size of the Assembly were the additional cost, and its impact on the delivery of public services.

\(^6\) The numbers shown in brackets here add up to 700. Figure 1 shows that 710 responses were opposed an increase to the size of the Assembly. See footnote 2 on page 16 for an explanation of the difference in these totals.
How many Members does the Assembly need?

Of those opposed to increasing the size of the Assembly, 68 per cent (480) did not suggest an appropriate number of Assembly Members. 13 per cent (90) of those opposed to an increase wanted the number of Members kept at 60, 9 per cent (60) wanted fewer than 60 Members and 10 per cent (70) wanted the Assembly to be abolished altogether.

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

The main reasons given for opposing an increase in the size of the Assembly were the additional cost, and its impact on the delivery of public services.

The numbers shown in brackets here add up to 700. Figure 1 shows that 710 responses were opposed an increase to the size of the Assembly. See footnote 2 on page 16 for an explanation of the difference in these totals.

How should Assembly Members be elected?

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

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

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

Of the 1,330 responses to this question, 54 per cent (720) indicated a preference for the Single Transferable Vote System, 17 per cent (230) preferred the Flexible List Proportional Representation System and 16 per cent (210) favoured the Mixed Member Proportional System. 13 per cent (170) of responses did not favour any of the three options put forward by the Expert Panel.

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

- Single Transferable Vote (720)
- Flexible List Proportional Representation (230)
- Mixed Member Proportional Representation (also known as the Additional Members System) (210)
- Did not indicate a preference for any of the three electoral systems proposed by the Expert Panel (170)
Creating a Parliament for Wales: Summary of the main findings

How should Assembly Members be elected?

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

Of the 1,340 responses to this question, 61 per cent (820) said that they agreed with the Expert Panel’s recommendation that a change to the electoral system should be used to encourage the election of an Assembly that more accurately reflects the diverse nature of society in Wales. 30 per cent (400) of responses disagreed with the recommendation and 9 per cent (120) said ‘don’t know’.

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

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

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

Some responses to this question did not state a clear preference for voluntary or formal measures. Rather they provided comments relating to the promotion of diversity, with 24 per cent (190) of responses saying either that the best person should be elected regardless of gender and other characteristics, or that giving voters a good choice of candidates is more important than promoting diversity.
Creating a Parliament for Wales: Summary of the main findings

How should Assembly Members be elected?

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Figure 7: Views on the constituency model which should be used if the Assembly were to adopt either the Single Transferable Vote or Flexible List Proportional Representation*
Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

**Question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The same people should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections and in local government elections in Wales.

Of the 1,570 responses to this question, 86 per cent (1,350) felt the same people should be allowed to vote in Assembly and local government elections in Wales (62 per cent (980) strongly agreed and 24 per cent (370) agreed).

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

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses.](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

**Question: What should be the minimum voting age for Assembly elections?**

- 16
- 18
- Don’t know

Of the 1,530 responses to this question, 59 per cent (910) thought the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be lowered from 18 to 16.7

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

81 per cent (100) of the 120 responses to this question were from people who identified themselves as being under the age of 18 and who thought the minimum voting age for Assembly elections should be lowered from 18 to 16.8

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7 A total number of 1,530 responses received is shown here. The total of the numbers shown in figure 9 is 1,540. See footnote 2 on page 16 for an explanation of the difference in these figures.

8 100 of 120 responses from under 18s is shown here as 81 per cent. 100 is actually 83 per cent of 120. The 81 per cent shown here is based on actual numbers of responses whilst the 83 per cent is based on rounded numbers of responses. See footnote 2 on page 16 for further information.
Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

**Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: All legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship.**

Of the 1,480 responses to this question, 66 per cent (980) felt that all legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship (42 per cent (620) strongly agreed and 24 per cent (360) agreed).

*Figure 10: Views on whether all legal residents in Wales should be allowed to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship*
Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

**Question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the UK Government’s intention for UK elections.

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

**Figure 11: Views on whether prisoners released on temporary licence or on home detention curfew should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections**
Who should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections?

**Question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Prisoners whose due release date falls before the end of the term of the Assembly for which they are voting should be allowed to vote in Assembly elections, in line with the Welsh Government’s intention for local government elections in Wales.

Of the 1,440 responses to this question, 49 per cent (700) were in favour of prisoners being able to vote in an Assembly election if they were due to be released during the period for which Members were being elected to serve9 (23 per cent (330) strongly agreed and 26 per cent (370) agreed), while 36 per cent10 (530) did not agree (16 per cent (230) disagreed and 21 per cent (300) strongly disagreed).

**Figure 12: Views on whether prisoners whose due release date falls before the end of the term of the Assembly for which they are voting should be allowed to vote in Assembly election**

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

10 This combined total of 36 per cent is based on the combined actual numbers of responses rounded off to the nearest complete one per cent. The 16 per cent who disagreed and 21 per cent who strongly disagreed are based separately on the actual numbers of responses who gave those responses, not combined, and rounded off to the nearest complete one per cent.
Who should be able to be an Assembly Member?

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

Of the 510 responses to this question, 34 per cent (180) agreed that legislation to reform the Assembly’s electoral arrangements should include provision to implement the recommendations of the Fourth Assembly’s Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee in relation to disqualification from being an Assembly Member. 13 per cent (70) of responses disagreed.

The other responses to this question did not firmly agree or disagree with the question. Rather they either commented on the Committee’s recommendations, answered ‘don’t know’ or said that they had not understood the question. Comments raised on the Committee’s recommendations included for example the proposing of additional disqualifications, the highlighting of issues in relation to the recommendations or stating there should be no restrictions on being able to stand for election.
Should the law relating to electoral administration be rationalised?

Question: Should legislation to reform the Assembly’s electoral arrangements include provision to implement:

i. the Electoral Commission’s recommendations that costs relating to translation between Welsh and English should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners?

ii. the Electoral Commission’s recommendations that costs relating to an individual’s disability should not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in relation to Assembly elections as they already are for non-party campaigners?

iii. the Law Commission’s recommendations in relation to the conduct and administration of elections?

Please give reasons for your answers.

Of the 750 responses to the first part of this question, 71 per cent (530) felt the Assembly should legislate to ensure costs relating to translation between Welsh and English do not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in Assembly elections, as recommended by the Electoral Commission. 21 per cent (150) of respondents disagreed.

Of the 700 responses to the second part of this question, 86 per cent (600) felt the Assembly should legislate to ensure costs relating to an individual’s disability do not count towards expenditure limits for political parties and candidates in Assembly elections, as recommended by the Electoral Commission.

Of the 420 responses to the third part of this question, 57 per cent (240) considered that the Assembly should legislate to implement the Law Commission’s recommendations in relation to the conduct and administration of elections.
Should the Assembly have flexibility to decide on its internal arrangements?

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

The changes set out in the consultation document were:

- Flexibility over the number of Deputy Presiding Officers the Assembly elects, and the number of Assembly Commissioners it appoints.
- An increase to the time limit on when the first meeting of the Assembly must be held after an Assembly election, from seven days to fourteen days.
- An increase to the time limit within which the Assembly must elect a Deputy Presiding Officer, from the current requirement of the first meeting after an election to 28 days, in line with the time limit for the election of the First Minister.

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