

11 December 2017

Dear Colleague

Creating the Right Culture: Inquiry into the Review of the Code of Conduct for Assembly Members

Assembly Members carry out the Assembly's democratic work; they represent the interests of Wales and its people, make laws for Wales and hold the Welsh Government to account. As such we are keen to ensure that the environment in which we work is positive and open.

As a parliament, we are committed to having an inclusive organisational culture, which empowers people to interact with the democratic process, is an exemplary place to work and which welcomes thousands of visitors to its estate.

Inappropriate behaviour has no place in our institution. We want to make sure everybody feels able to raise concerns about behaviour that they are not comfortable with by anyone connected with the National Assembly for Wales. The Llywydd, Chair of the Standards Committee and group leaders issued a [statement](#) about tackling inappropriate behaviour in the Assembly on 15 November 2017.

To ensure that we are meeting the high expectations we set for ourselves, and to action the commitments in the statement, the Standards of Conduct Committee has agreed to:

- Consider the existing procedures around complaints¹ to ensure they are appropriate and clear so that individuals feel able to come forward with confidence about any concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour;

¹ As set out in the [Code of Conduct for Assembly Members](#) and the [Procedure for Dealing with Complaints about Assembly Members](#)



- Develop a respect and dignity policy which spells out that inappropriate behaviour has no place in this organisation; and
- Review the sanctions available to the Committee to ensure that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with appropriately.

As this is an issue which potentially impacts on all aspects of the National Assembly for Wales, we will be working closely with the Welsh Government and Assembly Commission to ensure the same standards apply to all.

The Committee would like to hear your views on the following questions:

- Would you feel comfortable making a complaint about an Assembly Member or somebody who works on the Assembly estate? If not, why?
- Would you know how to make a complaint about an Assembly Member or somebody who works on the Assembly estate?
- Do you feel there are any barriers to you raising concerns about the inappropriate behaviour of an Assembly Member or somebody who works on the Assembly estate?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding how the complaints procedure be simplified?
 - Is the guidance clear? Is the language used simple to understand?
 - Does the document help you understand who you should contact about different types of complaints?
 - If you were a victim of inappropriate behaviour, would you feel confident in using the procedure as it currently stands?

Invitation to contribute to the inquiry

The Committee welcomes responses in English or Welsh. It is the intention to hold oral evidence sessions in due course, please indicate if you would be happy to provide oral evidence to the Committee.



Submissions should include numbered paragraphs, and focus on the matters set out above. Please see [guidance for those providing evidence for committees](#).

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy (preferably **not** in PDF) of your submission to SeneddStandards@Assembly.Wales

Alternatively, you can write to:

Committee Clerk - Standards of Conduct Committee
National Assembly for Wales - Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

If you wish your response to be treated anonymously or in private, please indicate in your accompanying email/letter.

Submissions should arrive by **31 January 2018**. It may not be possible to take into account responses received after this date.

Disclosure of Information

The Assembly's policy on disclosure of information can be accessed [here](#), please ensure that you have considered these details carefully before submitting information to the Committee. Alternatively a hard copy of this policy can be requested by contacting the Clerk (0300 200 6377).

Yours faithfully



Jayne Bryant AM
Chair

