



Welsh Government

## Consultation – summary of response

Access to Elected Office Fund.

16 February 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
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**Overview**

This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation for the access to elected office fund.

**Action Required**

This document is for information only.

**Further information and related documents**

**Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.**

**Contact details**

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**Additional Copies**

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

**Also available in Welsh at:**

**URL**

## Introduction

Creating a more equal Wales, where everyone has the opportunity to participate, reach their full potential and is able to contribute fully to the economy, will enable Wales to be more prosperous and innovative. The Welsh Government is committed to increasing diversity across all aspects of public life. This includes tackling the barriers which prevent an individual's active participation in local democracy through standing for elected office. Welsh Ministers have committed to identifying ways to address these barriers and increase opportunities for under-represented groups to play a full role in supporting and representing their communities.

## Engagement

Views were invited as part of a ten week consultation period which began on 11 November 2020 and closed on 20 January 2021. The consultation was published on the Welsh Government's website. Respondents were able to submit their views and comments on paper, by email or online, and in Welsh or English.

In addition, Disability Wales held three virtual consultation engagement events which were attended (virtually) by a total of 25 people who were able to discuss the questions within the consultation. These contributions are included in the overall total number of responses.

There were 48 responses in total to the consultation. The respondent type is broken down as follows:

Individual	32
Councils/Councillors	5
Organisation	11

## Summary of Response

This document is intended as a summary of the responses received. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents.

### Q1. On what basis do you consider the fund should operate?

- Medical proof of impairment
- Self – define as disabled

13% of respondents agreed that individuals applying to the fund should be required to provide medical proof of impairment, while 77% of respondents agreed that the criteria should be based upon individuals self-defining as disabled. The remaining 10% did not select either approach.

Respondents who favoured the medical proof approach raised concerns about the integrity of the system and the need to avoid abuse by confirmation of the legitimacy of applicants accessing public funds. However the majority of respondents expressed concern about requiring medical proof and the potential that the approach could be intrusive and may prove to be an additional barrier and disincentive for individuals considering standing for elected office. Many also commented that the definition of disability within the Equality Act

2010 is outdated and that as the Welsh Government has committed to the Social Model of Disability this should form the basis of access criteria.

**Q2. Do you agree there should be no limit placed upon the amount each applicant is able to receive from the fund?**

Yes	88%
No	10%
No view	2%

The majority of respondents felt that the level of funding allocated should be based on individual need as each applicant will have different requirements. There were a small number of respondents who felt an upper limit placed on funding allocations may result in the fund being able to support a larger number of applicants.

**Q3. Do you agree Disability Wales should provide a financial support service for applicants?**

Yes	92%
No	6%
No view	2%

92% of respondents agreed that Disability Wales could provide a financial support service for applicants. However it was clear that this should only be the case where applicants were comfortable with this approach. Respondents considered a flexible approach would be required to enable applicants to manage their own financial support if that was their preference.

**Q4. Do you agree applicants should cease to receive support from this fund, once the outcome of the election to the seat they contested is known?**

Yes	83%
No	17%

83% of respondents agreed applicants should cease to receive support from this fund, once the outcome of the election to the seat they contested is known. Respondents commented that should the individual be elected, the body to which they were elected will become responsible for the provision of any support they may require whilst in elected office. Respondents expressed concern over whether elected candidates would continue to receive the same level of support once elected through their council or political party. Respondents felt the transition from candidate to elected member should be seamless and that it is important adequate provision to support members with disabilities during their term in office should be in place. A small number of respondents felt that support should continue throughout the transition from candidate to sworn in member.

**Q5. Do you agree that where an individual has had to withdraw their candidacy, decisions about recovery of funds already allocated should be considered on an individual basis?**

Yes	33%
No	60%
No view	6%

33% of respondents agreed where an individual has had to withdraw their candidacy, decisions about recovery of funds already allocated should be considered on an individual case by case basis. While 60% did not agree that funding should be withdrawn the substance of the responses were that each case would be different and that any decision resulting in a recovery of funding could be detrimental to the health and well-being of that individual. A key point made by respondents was that the application criteria should be clear and state that applicants should inform Disability Wales as soon as they withdraw their candidacy and that no further funding / support should be provided following that date.

**Q6. Do you think the name of the fund should remain Access to Elected Office Fund?**

Yes	88%
No	4%
No view	8%

88% of respondents agreed the name of the fund should remain Access to Elected Office Fund. Respondents felt that keeping the name of the fund the same as other parts of the UK would cause less confusion amongst individuals seeking support.