

Inquiry into Lobbying Consultation

May 2022

The Standards of Conduct Committee (the Committee) are undertaking an inquiry into Lobbying.

The Committee is keen to establish whether lobbying is a matter of concern to the people of Wales, and whether there is more that could be done to increase transparency around decision making in Wales.

The Committee would welcome your views on the questions posed in this consultation. Please submit your response by 23 June 2022 to SeneddStandards@senedd.wales.

How to Respond

Providing Written Evidence

The Senedd has two official languages, Welsh and English.

In line with the [Senedd's Official Languages Scheme](#) the Committee requests that documents or written responses to consultations intended for publication or use in Senedd proceedings are submitted bilingually. When documents or written responses are not submitted bilingually, we will publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only.

We expect other organisations to implement their own standards or schemes and to comply with their statutory obligation.

Please see [guidance for those providing evidence for committees](#).



Submissions should be no longer than five sides of A4, with numbered paragraphs, and should focus on matters set out in the document.

If you wish to submit evidence, please submit a single document (preferably as a Word document) with any tables, spreadsheets and annexes incorporated into the paper of your submission to [**SeneddStandards@senedd.wales**](mailto:SeneddStandards@senedd.wales).

At present, Senedd staff are primarily working from home. Therefore, any correspondence received other than by electronic means may not be attended to in a timely manner.

The deadline for submissions is 5.00pm on **Thursday 23 June 2022**.

Disclosure of Information

Please ensure that you have considered the Senedd's [**policy on disclosure of information**](#) before submitting information to the Committee. Alternatively, a hard copy of this policy can be requested by contacting the Committee Clerk (0300 200 6565) or [**SeneddStandards@senedd.wales**](mailto:SeneddStandards@senedd.wales).

Inquiry into Lobbying: Consultation

1. The Standards of Conduct Committee is undertaking an inquiry into lobbying and is keen to establish whether lobbying is a matter of concern to the people of Wales. It has agreed to consider:

"Whether the Senedd's current arrangements relating to lobbying are sufficiently robust and fit-for-purpose for the Sixth Senedd."

2. There is no clear agreed definition of what is meant by lobbying. In the broadest sense it is to seek to influence (a legislator) on an issue. This is an important function within politics, and the challenge is to ensure that this type of influence is transparent and understood.

3. At present the Senedd does not have a lobbying register, but instead has guidance in relation to lobbying which was agreed by a resolution in Plenary in 2013. This guidance supplements and complements the provisions within the Code of Conduct in relation to lobbying, and makes it clear Members should not undertake paid work which involves them lobbying on somebodies behalf. It sets out some of the considerations Members should have in relation to dealing with potential lobbyists such as producing records and notes of such meetings.

4. The Senedd also has rules in relations to Cross-Party Groups, which are groups of Members and relevant people external to the Senedd based around a particular area. These rules were introduced after the issue was first considered in 2013. More information and a full list of the Cross-Party Groups can be found on the Senedd website.

5. The Fifth Senedd Standards of Conduct Committee considered lobbying. One option that was considered was a statutory register of lobbyists – this is where lobbyist contact with Members of the Senedd would be recorded on a register. There are many different forms that a register could take and the inquiry noted the arguments for and against statutory registers. The then Committee agreed to wait for the outcome of a review in Scotland of the introduction of a Scottish lobbying register to help make a more informed decision. The Public Accounts and Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee in the Scottish Parliament issued its review of the legislation in March 2021.

6. In previous Senedd inquiries, it was not perceived that there was any particular lobbying problem in Wales at that time.

7. Given the commitment to review this issue regularly, the Sixth Senedd Standards of Conduct Committee has agreed to look at lobbying as its next inquiry.

8. As part of this inquiry the Committee is keen to establish what the public's perception on lobbying is. The Committee would like to know:

- What do you understand by the term lobbying?
- What concerns, if any, do you have about lobbying of Members of the Senedd?
- What is your understanding about the role that Cross-Party Groups play in relation to lobbying in the Senedd, and do you have any comments/concerns?
- How do you think we could achieve greater transparency around decision making in Wales?
- Do you consider yourself a lobbyist? How is lobbying regulated within your sector at the moment (e.g. if you are a private business, third sector, professional organisation)?
- Have you encountered any problems with the provisions in the Code and the guidance on lobbying and access to Members of the Senedd (agreed 2013)?
- Are there any areas relating to lobbying that you consider to be unregulated in this area which pose a risk to the accountability and reputation of governance in Wales?