



11.0 Engagement and Influencing

The Welsh Parliament and the Welsh Government

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Introduction

Senedd Cymru, or the **Welsh Parliament**, is the **legislative** body for Wales. Its role is to scrutinise the work of the Welsh and hold the Government to account.

The **Welsh Government** is the **executive** body for Wales. It is made up of the First Minister, other Welsh Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Counsel General.



Image: Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament
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The distinction between the two bodies is the same as the distinction between the **UK Parliament** and the **UK Government**. Being clear about the difference between the two can be very beneficial for third sector organisations in order to ensure that you are talking to the right people about the right things and using all available opportunities to influence decision makers and have your say. This information sheet will explain more about each of the institutions, how they work and opportunities for the third sector to influence each of them.

The Welsh Government

How It Is Made Up

The **Welsh Government** is made up of the First Minister, other Welsh Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Counsel General. The First Minister is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the nomination of the **Senedd Cymru**. The Ministers and Counsel General are appointed by the First Minister and approved by the Queen. The number of Ministers and Deputy Ministers cannot exceed 12.

The Counsel General is the Chief Legal Adviser to the **Welsh Government**, he or she is not a Welsh Minister but is a member of the **Welsh Government**. The Counsel General can be Member of the Senedd but does not have to be, if s/he is not an MS they are entitled to take part in **Senedd** but not to vote.

The process means that generally the leader of the party that wins the most number of seats in an Senedd Election becomes the First Minister and that party become the party in Government. However, in the event of no party winning a majority of the seats it may be necessary for a coalition government to be formed as was the case in 2000 and 2007. In this instance the ministerial posts are normally divided between the two ruling parties.

What It Does

The Welsh Government is responsible for:

- Making decisions on matters which affect people's daily lives
- Developing and implementing policy
- Making subordinate legislation (e.g. regulations and statutory guidance)
- Proposing new legislation

Overall it is responsible for the day to day running of Wales in all of the devolved policy areas, these include the Health Service, education, housing, social services, agriculture, transport and many more. The work of the **Welsh Government** is led by the Ministers and delivered by civil servants.

Relationship With the Third Sector and Opportunities for Influence

The relationship between the **Welsh Government** and the third sector is set out in the **Government of Wales Act 2006**. It states that;



'Welsh Ministers must make a scheme (the voluntary sector scheme) setting out how they propose, in the exercise of their functions, to promote the interests of relevant voluntary organisations'

It sets out a statutory relationship between the sector and the **Welsh Government** and requires the **Welsh Government** to report on the **Voluntary Sector Scheme** (also known as the **third sector scheme**) annually and keep it under review.

This means that the sector has a formal mechanism for its engagement with the **Welsh Government** which includes a third sector partnership council administered by **WCVA** and regular Ministerial meetings with representatives from the sector.

The '**partnership**' arrangement between the **Welsh Government** and the sector means that the sector:

- Has an equal say with the **Welsh Government** about the arrangements by which the **Welsh Government** and the voluntary sector will work together
- Will contribute at a formative stage in informing the development of policy and programmes across the **Welsh Government** and has its proposals assessed against the same criteria as the public sector
- Contributes its views on the procedures for the administration of resources and priorities for the distribution of resources for the voluntary sector
- Has access to its own information, training, and capacity building services and resources
- Has opportunities to lead in those areas where it is best placed to do so

As part of the voluntary sector scheme each **Welsh Government Minister** is committed to meeting with representatives from the voluntary sector twice a year. These meetings are facilitated by **WCVA** and the sector representatives come from the various **WCVA** policy networks.

Other important mechanisms for organisations to use when influencing the **Welsh Government** are providing responses to formal consultation documents and building relationships with individual Ministers, civil servants and special advisers.

Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament)

How It Is Made Up

The **Senedd** is made up of 60 Members of the Senedd (MSs) and is administered by the **Senedd Commission**. The Commission was established by the **Government of Wales Act 2006** and is responsible for ensuring that the **Senedd** has the resources, staff and services that it requires.



More information on the Senedd Commission can be found in a separate information sheet.

11.7 The Senedd Commission

The MSs are elected as follows: one MS is elected to represent each of the 40 constituencies in Wales using the first past the post system; a further 20 MSs are elected from regional lists using the Additional Member System which is a form of proportional representation.

Senedd elections take place every 5 years (**usually**) and each voter is given two votes. The first vote is for the individual they would like to represent their constituency (**this forms the first past the post element in that the person with the most votes wins**); the second vote is for a political party and the results of this are used on a regional basis (**Wales is divided into 5 regions**) to allocate the remaining 20 seats to the candidates that each party has put forward.

This system goes some way towards ensuring that the overall number of seats held by each political party reflects the share of the vote that the party receives.

What It Does

The role of the **Senedd** is to hold the Government to account and scrutinise legislation. This can involve scrutinising the way in which Welsh Ministers discharge their functions; scrutinising and approving the budget; scrutinising subordinate legislation and making and scrutinising Welsh laws (**known as Acts of the Senedd**) and proposals for taxation.

This is done via plenary sessions and via committees. Plenary sessions take place on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and are the decision making and law making forum of the **Senedd**.

A committee is a group of Members of the Senedd (MSs) who meet to scrutinise policy and legislation. Committees are generally party balanced reflecting the number of MSs making up each party in the **Senedd**.

Relationship With the Third Sector and Opportunities for Influence

Unlike the statutory relationship that exists between the **Welsh Government** and the third sector through the **Voluntary Sector Scheme** there is no formal relationship between the sector and the **Senedd**. However, there are many opportunities for the third sector to influence the work of the **Senedd** and feed into its work.

These include:

The Petitions Process

The **Government of Wales Act 2006** created a new petitioning system within the **Senedd** which provides the opportunity for the Welsh public to ask the **Senedd** to look at issues of importance to them. Any petition that has 10 or more signatures and falls within the scope of the **Senedd**'s functions must be considered by a Committee who will then decide how each issue should be taken forward.



More information on the Petitions Process can be found in a separate information sheet.

11.8 Launching a Petition

Committee Inquiries

Senedd Committees regularly undertake inquiries into specific issues covered by their broad portfolios. These inquiries tend to involve a public consultation process / call for evidence and interested organisations can be invited to give evidence to committees in person.

Contributing to committee inquiries is a good way to present your views to a cross party group of MSs who are keen to hear from a wide range of stakeholders in order to scrutinise the work of the **Welsh Government**. Each inquiry will result in a report and recommendations to the **Welsh Government**.

Lobbying individual Senedd Members

All MSs have an interest in ensuring that the views of the of the people that they represent are heard. Many MSs also have specific area of interest and can be useful allies for supporting organisation's campaigns. It is always worth making sure that all MSs are given information about any campaigns that you are running or issues that you wish to raise. This can be done by sending briefings (**the more succinct the better**); arranging a face to face meeting or asking an MS to sponsor or speak at an event that you are holding.

Suggesting ideas for legislation

The **Senedd** can make legislation in 20 devolved policy areas. This means that there is an opportunity for the third sector to highlight gaps or flaws in current legislation and suggest new laws that could be made in Wales. This is not a simple process and there are a number of issues to consider as the **Senedd** is not allowed to make laws in all policy areas but this is an opportunity for the third sector nonetheless. Ideas for new legislation can be proposed by the **Welsh Government, Senedd Committees, the Senedd Commission** and individual MSs if they are selected in a ballot.



For more information on this topic see separate information sheets:

11.6 Making Legislation

Further Information

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Tel: 0800 2888 329

www.wcva.org.uk

Welsh Government

www.wales.gov.uk

Senedd (Welsh Parliament)

www.senedd.wales



Cefnogi Trydydd
Sector **Cymru**

Third Sector
Support **Wales**

Third Sector Support Wales is a network of support organisations for the whole of the third sector in Wales.

It consists of the 19 local and regional support bodies across Wales, the County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and the national support body, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

For further information contact
<https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/contact/>

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.