

Assembly Member holidays

05/07/2012

Dear

Request for Information.

Thank you for your request received on 21 June in which you asked for information which relates to Assembly Member holidays.

I am afraid that we do not hold the information you have asked for and that indeed the information which you are interested in does not at present exist. This is because of the legal basis on which Assembly Members (AMs) and other similar representatives such as Members of Parliament carry out their work.

Members are elected to the office of AM and then have the right to take part in the proceedings of the Assembly. They are not employed by the Assembly and have no contracts of employment. So there is no document which defines which days, or how many days, they must devote to their work as AMs. That work is not, of course, confined to attendance at formal meetings at the Assembly. It also includes work in and in connection with their constituencies and regions.

Although there are times of the year when the Assembly is in "recess", when no formal meetings take place, this does not mean that AMs are "on holiday". Much of the recess will be taken up with constituency and regional work. If an AM decides, during a recess, to set aside a period as a formal "holiday", that is a matter for the individual AM in question and he or she is not required to notify the Assembly of that fact. The Assembly Commission therefore holds no records relating to AM holidays.

As you have suggested in your letter, the Independent Review Panel (chaired by Sir Roger Jones), in their 2009 ['Getting It Right For Wales'](#) report (copy enclosed), recommended that Party Groups (i.e. not the Assembly itself) should record Assembly Members' holidays. This was one of a total of 108 recommendations, including a recommendation to establish an independent Remuneration Board to ensure that Assembly Members have fair and

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg/We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

appropriate resources to carry out their vital job of representing the people of Wales, holding the Welsh Government to account and making laws for Wales.

The Remuneration Board was established in September 2010 and, as part of their initial review, gave consideration to each of the recommendations made within the 'Getting It Right for Wales' report. When reviewing the recommendation that Party Groups should record Assembly Members' holidays, the Remuneration Board noted that the recommendation relating to recording holidays, and any issue of entitlement to holidays, was a matter for Party Groups and thus outside the remit of Board. Holiday entitlements and arrangements continue to be solely a matter for Assembly Members and their Party Groups to discuss and decide upon.

Further details on the Remuneration Board, including copies of its reports and minutes of meetings, can be accessed on the Assembly website at the following link http://www.assemblywales.org/memhome/pay-expenses-financial-interests-standards/mem-allow-pay-pensions/remuneration_board.htm

Your request has been considered according to the principles set out in the Code of Practice on Public Access to Information. The code is published on our website at http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/abt-foi/abt-foi-cop-pub.htm

If you have any questions regarding this response please contact me. If you feel you have cause for complaint, please follow the guidance at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Alison Rutherford
Access to Information Coordinator
National Assembly for Wales

Cause for concern or complaint with your FOI response?

If you believe that I have not applied the Code correctly or have not followed the relevant laws, you may make a formal complaint to the Chief Executive and Clerk at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay. Details of the Assembly's complaints principles are set out in the Code of Practice on Complaints available on the Internet at <http://www.assemblywales.org/conhome/con-complaint.htm>. Please advise me if you wish to receive a printed copy.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

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