

Welsh Conservative response to the Standards of Conduct Committee's Inquiry into the Registration and Declaration of Interests

24th April 2023

This document sets out the response of the Welsh Conservative Group in the Welsh Parliament in relation to aspects of the Standards of Conduct Committee's consultation into the registration and declaration of Members' interests.

Categories of interests to be registered:

The Welsh Conservative Group believes that the current categories that require registration are sufficient. However, category 10 could be expanded to include Membership/Chairmanship of bodies in receipt of Welsh Government funding and not just Senedd funding to improve transparency.

Members also feel that the time election associated with categories 1 and 2 could be amended to reflect the time actually spent on these aspect more appropriately. For example, some aspects of category 2 could be seasonal but the register implies that the member is carrying out this activity for up to 5 hours a week across the year, which would be misleading for members of the public.

The Group fully appreciates that the register must be kept up to date however, where a member changes their role by stepping down, for example as a school governor, this should not necessarily be an automatic referral as the member has been transparent in being involved in that organisation.

Declaring registerable and relevant interests:

The Group is satisfied with the current rules for declaring under Standing Orders 13.8A and 17.24A with regards to participation in Plenary and Committees.

Additional registration requirements:

The Group does not believe that it would be appropriate to require Member's family members employed using Senedd funds to be named on the register, or including a spouses' membership of organisations to the register.

The Guidance

The Group welcomes the move by the Senedd's Table Office to enable digital registration away from the paper based format that is currently used.