

Briefing Paper

May 2016



The fifth Welsh Government

1. Introduction

On 5 May 2016 60 representatives were elected to form the Welsh Assembly. The National Assembly for Wales' website contains details of all [newly elected Welsh Assembly Members](#), including the elected [Presiding Officer](#), Elin Jones AM, and [Deputy Presiding Officer](#), Ann Jones AM.

Welsh Labour remains the largest party in the Senedd with 29 seats, but fell short of being able to form a majority. Read more about the election in [WCVA's briefing 'The Welsh Assembly Elections 2016 - post-election briefing for the third sector in Wales'](#).

The balance of influence between the parties has shifted significantly. This was demonstrated in the days following the election by the challenge in the Senedd from Leanne Wood, Leader of Plaid Cymru and Assembly Member for the Rhondda, to Carwyn Jones, Leader of Welsh Labour and AM for Bridgend, for the role of First Minister. Negotiations between the two parties resulted in Plaid's support for the nomination of Carwyn Jones as First Minister, in return for concessions, laid out in a Compact between the two parties.

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- confirm new Cabinet members and Ministers and their portfolios; and
- provide information about the priorities of the Welsh Government.

2. The new Welsh Government - May 2016

On 17 May the National Assembly for Wales elected [Carwyn Jones AM as First Minister for Wales](#). On 19 May the First Minister announced his new Cabinet and Ministers:

[Ken Skates](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure](#)

[Vaughan Gething](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport](#)

[Mark Drakeford](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government](#)

[Kirsty Williams](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Education](#)

[Lesley Griffiths](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

[Carl Sargeant](#)
[Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children](#)

[Jane Hutt](#)
[Leader of the House and Chief Whip](#)

[Julie James](#)
[Minister for Skills and Science](#)

[Alun Davies](#)
[Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language](#)

[Rebecca Evans](#)
[Minister for Social Services and Public Health](#)

Portfolio responsibilities can be viewed through the hyperlinks above.

In order to drive policy and delivery from the heart of Government, a new Cabinet Office will be established. The first priority of the new office will be to establish delivery plans for the top six pledges from the Welsh Labour manifesto.

3. Welsh Government priorities and the first 100 days

With no majority in the Assembly, the [Statement by the First Minister of Wales: Moving Wales Forward](#) acknowledged the clear need for the government to work with others for the good of the Welsh people, with the stated aspiration for this Assembly to be more open and more confident than the last.

The stated priorities for the first 100 days in Government are:

- securing a successful and sustainable future for our steel industry; and
- campaigning “vociferously” for a ‘Remain’ vote in the EU referendum.

The First Minister made clear that no new legislation will be brought forward in the first 100 days, giving political groups in the Assembly some time to establish a new way of doing law-making in Wales, and allowing all parties to jointly develop a scrutiny and committee procedure that is better suited to this institution’s Parliamentary responsibilities.

Once the Assembly is in a position to better scrutinise legislation, the stated priorities are to look to progress:

- a new Public Health Bill;
- an Additional Learning Needs Bill;
- legislation that will remove the defence of reasonable chastisement;
- amendments to the current Welsh language measure; and
- the Wales Bill deadlock.

The government will also seek to establish a Parliamentary Review into the long-term future of Health and Social Care in Wales.

4. Compact between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru

The First Minister's statement formally acknowledges the Compact between Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru to Move Wales Forward, which entails:

- the establishment of three Liaison Committees on Finance, Legislation and the Constitution, comprising a Labour Minister, a Plaid Cymru representative, staffed by the civil service;
- a commitment to work together on the European referendum campaign in a spirit of co-operation;
- a commitment to begin discussions on joint policy priorities where there is common ground, including:
 - childcare - work will be prioritised to deliver 30 hours free childcare for working parents, with a focus on quality of provision and equity of access - both in terms of geographical reach and language;
 - apprenticeships and skills - a commitment to bring forward at least 100,000 new all-age apprentices in this term;
 - infrastructure and business finance - a new National Infrastructure Commission, and a new Welsh development bank will be established;
 - health - a New Treatment Fund will be established, with a commitment to end the post-code lottery for new drugs and treatments; plus plans for the recruitment and training of additional GPs and other primary healthcare professionals.

5. A 'Progressive Agreement' with the Welsh Liberal Democrats

Following the invitation from the First Minister for Kirsty Williams AM (Liberal Democrat) to join the Cabinet, a statement on a 'Progressive Agreement' between Welsh Labour and Kirsty Williams was published. This included commitments to:

- health - extending the Nurse Staffing Levels Act and ending "mental health discrimination";
- housing - 20,000 extra affordable homes and a new 'Rent to Own' model;
- finance - a funding floor for local government settlements;
- agriculture - a small grants scheme in the rural development plan;
- education - reducing infant class sizes to a maximum of 25, and maintaining the higher education (HE) budget in light of the forthcoming Diamond Review of funding for HE.

These early stage negotiations set the tone for a more open and consensual approach for the fifth Assembly term.

6. The EU referendum

Alongside the First Minister's statement, the new programme for the Westminster Government was announced in the Queen's Speech on 18 May 2016. Much of the content of the Westminster and Welsh legislative programmes depends on the result of the referendum regarding the UK's membership of the European Union (EU) to be held on 23 June 2016. If the result is to leave the EU, the priorities of both Governments are certain to be affected.

The Assembly Research Service has produced an analysis on [What will the outcome of the EU referendum mean for Wales and the Assembly?](#)

7. Next steps

WCVA will continue to publish up-dates on developments throughout the fifth Assembly term.

In addition, please look out for forthcoming opportunities to engage in consultation on WCVA's strategic review of our role in supporting the third sector in Wales, including how the sector engages with the Welsh Assembly through the [Third Sector Scheme](#) and other mechanisms.