
**Public attitudes to dual candidacy
in elections to the
National Assembly for Wales**



Occasional Paper No.5

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Summary

- **The Better Governance for Wales White Paper proposes legislation to prevent candidates standing in both constituency and regional list elections to the National Assembly for Wales.**
- **There is little in-depth analysis or empirical evidence to support the various arguments made both for and against dual candidacy.**
- **This small scale project aimed to explore if the public have views on the issue, as is so often claimed.**
- **We found slightly more of the total number of respondents said that dual candidacy was unfair compared with those who felt candidates should be free to stand in both.**
- **This suggests that any proposals about dual candidacy – whether to change or retain the current system - need to be based on sound evidence and be mindful of differing views amongst the public.**
- **We found strong evidence that constituency members are regarded as the legitimate representative of an area and would be approached for help by the great majority of those interviewed.**
- **This suggests that there should be clarification of the roles of the two types of Assembly member.**
- **As expected, these views were part of a wider lack of understanding of the electoral process amongst many people and a division of views about proportional representation.**

1. Introduction

1. Despite its relative youth as an institution, the National Assembly for Wales is set to take another significant step in its development. Following the Better Governance for Wales White Paper¹, the Government of Wales Bill includes a range of proposed changes to the Assembly's powers, structure and arrangements for elections, some of which build upon the proposals set out in the report of the Richard Commission².
2. One issue which has attracted controversy is that of the arrangements for elections to the Assembly. On this issue, perhaps more than any other, the UK Government appears to be following a different course to that suggested by the Richard Commission, by retaining the Additional Member System rather than switching to the Single Transferable Vote system, by maintaining the current number of members rather than increasing it to 80, and by proposing to end the ability for candidates to stand in both constituency and regional list ballots.
3. This last question of 'dual candidacy' is the subject of this report. A number of arguments are made for and against allowing dual candidacy. The principal concerns are that there is public disquiet and confusion about the arrangements and that regional list and constituency AMs do not have equal legitimacy, status or value. It is countered that preventing dual candidacy would penalise smaller parties, and affect the quality of representation and of local campaigning.
4. Given the potential impact of dual candidacy if the protagonists are right, it is remarkable how little rigorous analysis or evidence is available. In many papers by very well respected authors assertions are made about dual candidacy which appear to have little firm foundation.
5. The issues that dual candidacy raises are various and complex, and relate to the views and workings of politicians and political parties as well as the electorate. This project looks simply at the views of a small number of the electorate in three constituencies in Wales in order to begin to explore the subject. Whilst it is a very small scale study, which cannot and does not claim to be statistically representative, the findings nevertheless highlight that there is confusion amongst the electorate about the electoral system, a strong identification with the constituency AM as the area's representative, and some disquiet about dual candidacy.
6. The research was sponsored by Wayne David MP. The research design and methodology, conduct of the interviews, analysis of the results and presentation of these conclusions have been the responsibility of Dr Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation. There has been no input to any aspect of the research by its sponsor. The interviews were conducted by Maggie McCollum, a post-graduate researcher at the University of Glamorgan.

2. How the research was undertaken

7. We decided to explore people's views in small, informal discussion groups, based in three case-study constituencies. We did this because this is a small scale, exploratory project, on a subject on which there has been little previous research and in which qualitative data about attitudes are more important than quantitative results.
8. We selected three Assembly constituencies in which to base the interviews – two of which had seen a candidate defeated in the constituency election of 2003 subsequently win a seat via the regional list, and one where this had not occurred. The examples of the former were Swansea East and Llanelli, and of the latter, Caerphilly. A profile of each constituency is attached at Annex 1.
9. A short, semi-structured questionnaire was devised (attached at Annex 2) and piloted. Interview participants were identified by approaching various voluntary and community groups listed in sources such as the Wales Year Book and local CVC directories and interviewed in groups of between 3 and 6 people, who volunteered to participate. Altogether, twelve different groups were interviewed involving 47 people. The groups are listed in Table 1.
10. The aim was to include a minimum of 3 group interviews per constituency, which included young people, people of working age, and people over retirement age. In the event, the project's tight timescale, the availability of participants in the month before Christmas, and the characteristics of the voluntary and community sector meant that it was not always possible to achieve this spread.
11. The characteristics of the people included are given in Table 2, from which it can be seen that there is a predominance of people over the age of 45, and of people who are either retired or not working for other reasons. The relative absence of under 45 year olds and people working full time means that the results are not statistically representative, nor were they intended to be.

Table 1 List of group interviews held

Swansea East		
23 rd November 2005	GSP Partnership	3
23 rd November 2005	Brunswick Church Luncheon Club	4
2 nd December 2005	Bonymaen Community Centre Luncheon club	6
Total	3	13
Caerphilly		
28 th November 2005	Rhymney Valley Mind – Ystrad Mynach	4
1 st December 2005	Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre	4
28 th November 2005	Trynhyder – Hafal group	5
28 th November 2005	Hyderus – Hafal group	3
28 th November 2005	BURD – Hafal group	5
28 th November 2005	KICK youth group, Caerphilly	3
Total	6	24
Llanelli		
22 nd November 2005	Disabled drivers' centre	3
22 nd November 2005	AntiOct Centre Parent / Toddler group	4
22 nd November 2005	AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group	3
Total	3	10
Grand total	12	47

Table 2 Characteristics of participants

Age	
18-24	4
25-44	11
45-64	15
65+	17
Employment Status	
Working full time	8
Working part time	10
Retired	17
Student	0
Other not working	12
Total participants	47

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12. The interviews were all held between 23rd November and 2nd December 2005. Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes: the shortest was 20 minutes and the longest 45 minutes. The interviewer was Maggie McCollum, an experienced social science postgraduate researcher at the University of Glamorgan.
 13. A selection of the responses received to each question is provided in each section to illustrate the comments made. The responses have been chosen so that one response is included from each group discussion, where a response was made. The number of responses quoted is **not** therefore indicative of the relative balance of opinion.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

14. Studies over the years have shown varying support for proportional representation in the UK, with responses to surveys varying with the wording of survey questions, shifting as voter knowledge increases, and being contradictory.
15. A key theme in surveys is the perception that proportional representation is complex. This can be subdivided into views about the mechanics of voting – how to mark the ballot paper – and views about how the system works.
16. There is strong survey evidence that people do not understand how the system of elections to the National Assembly for Wales works. A survey by the Centre for Elections and Social Trends following the 1999 election³ showed that 40% found the system difficult to understand – more than the number that found it easy to understand. Similarly the Electoral Commission’s review of the 2003 elections⁴ found that 58% said that they knew just a little or hardly anything about the Assembly’s electoral system. Lack of understanding was particularly marked amongst younger people.
17. Although public understanding of proportional representation in general and the Assembly’s electoral system was not the objective of this project, we nevertheless considered it an important part of gauging people’s views on dual candidacy.
18. The first question asked whether participants thought the electoral arrangements were complicated or straightforward. There is some evidence that the public is confused by the constituency and regional list ballots. A NOP study⁵ carried out for the Electoral Commission found there was confusion about the second part of Assembly election ballot paper, even among committed voters, and it cites comments such as:

‘That second sheet was just like a foreign language’

‘I was really confused about having to vote twice. What was that all about?’
19. Our interview groups revealed a widespread view that the system was complicated, although a significant minority expressed the view that it was straightforward once people were familiar with it. This is broadly in line with the findings found in the surveys referred to above.
20. However, a small number of comments were made about ‘voting for the person you want’ which suggests that participants were considering only the constituency element of the election, despite the explanations offered by the researcher. There were inevitably a few comments about the overall value of the National Assembly for Wales and about politics and politicians in general.
21. A selection of quotes to illustrate the points made is given in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 – SELECTED RESPONSES ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM.

Question: Some people say that this system is confusing. Other people say that it is easy to understand once they are used to it. Do you find it easy to understand or confusing?

Confusing

Very confusing. Do we really need this two tier system? *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

I think it is confusing. It seems complicated. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

I think it is a bit confusing. It is never sure who is representing what so it is confusing. There needs to be more explanation of the process. Maybe some kind of tree or flow chart to explain it. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

I thought I understood it but it is actually quite confusing. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

Sounds complicated *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

Who are these other people – it seems confusing. *Caerphilly – Hafal group, Hyderus, Bargoed*

It is not explained properly. Don't know which vote is relevant. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

I think people find it confusing because politicians don't go door to door anymore canvassing and explaining it to people. *Llanelli Disabled drivers centre*

I just don't understand it full stop *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

I don't get it - there is so many different lists and areas – its like they make it confusing on purpose. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

I get the basic idea but the way they make it puts me off even trying to decide who to vote for. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

Easy to understand

I think it is straight forward. I always understand who I am voting for. *Swansea East – Luncheon Club, Brunswick Church*

I think we all agree that it is straight forward *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

It's straightforward. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

I think it is ok – just have to try and understand how it works. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

I find it easy to understand, not that confusing. *Caerphilly – Kick Youth group*

I think it is pretty straight forward. *Llanelli Disabled drivers centre*

I think it is ok – you just need to pay attention *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

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22. The second question asked participants whether they thought the system should reflect everyone's views or should be based on first-past-the-post. This question was intended to be a simple way of gauging attitudes to proportional representation, again leading up to questions about dual candidacy. Although by no means as sophisticated as large scale surveys, responses to this question revealed similar results to such research. Over half the responses favoured the first past the post system, although as might be expected a substantial minority were in favour of proportional representation.
 23. Those in favour of 'first past the post' seemed to like the simplicity and clarity that it gave to the election, as well as being a familiar system. Those in favour of multiple members thought it was fairer as it allowed everyone to be heard, and also gave opportunities for smaller parties to have a voice. Figure 2 gives examples of the comments made by participants.

FIGURE 2 VIEWS ON FIRST PAST THE POST AND MULTIPLE MEMBERS

Some people say that this system makes sure the results reflect the views of everyone voting. Other people say that only the person with the most votes should be elected. What do you think?

Person with most votes

The one with the most votes should be elected. That makes the most sense. *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

Person with the most votes should be elected. *Swansea East – Luncheon Club, Brunswick Church*

It seems like it should be the one with the most votes but I am not sure. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

Only the person with the most votes should get in. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

It still seems strange that there is more than one winner. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

Should be first past the post – it shouldn't be that everyone can get in. *Caerphilly – Hafal group, Hyderus, Bargoed*

One winner is the way it should be, straight forward and fair. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

Should be the one with the most votes obviously. If that's what people voted for. *Llanelli Disabled drivers centre*

Whoever is the most popular amongst the voters should be the one elected and that's it. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

I don't think that its right that anyone other than the one with the most votes gets in. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

Reflect everyone's views

I know we should have proportional representation, so that is fair. But I think most people would want the one with the most votes elected. *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

One person can't take all the responsibility. It is better to hear everyone's views. *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

This system is a democracy at work – that's what it is all about. You technically pick the majority which is viewed across a spectrum. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

I'm not sure. I suppose it is better that everyone is heard. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

I agree with the idea of proportional representation – everyone deserves to be heard. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

I think proportional representation is fairer actually – not just one voice. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

It is good to hear everyone's views, more fair that way. *Caerphilly – Kick Youth group*

I think it should be proportional representation – that way you get what everybody wants. It is more equal in that respect. Smaller parties can get their views across. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

I suppose in one way it means that more than one person can get their opinion across. Looking at it that way maybe it is a good way to do it by having more than one winner in a way. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

4. TWO TYPES OF MEMBERS

24. The current system inevitably creates two categories of Assembly members – those elected by the first past the post system for individual constituencies and those elected via the regional list. Some of the concerns about the Additional Member System stem from this.
25. The Electoral Reform Society's evidence to the Richard Commission pointed out that the two categories of elected representatives could mean that:

*'Constituency Members are viewed as having greater legitimacy as representatives of issues in their constituencies, while the regional list Members are not regarded as local representatives in the same way.'*⁶
26. We have been unable to identify research evidence on the perception of the two categories of Assembly Members, so our own research sought to gather some initial perspectives. We asked participants in the interview groups whom they thought was best placed, in general terms, to represent their views, and secondly, we asked them whom they would approach if they had a problem. Only two respondents said they were unsure whom to approach.
27. The quotes in Figure 3 show that the vast majority of responses felt that the constituency member was best placed to represent them. It was suggested that 'local members' (the term used by interviewees to mean constituency members) could understand local issues better, and would fight harder to promote them. Some people also said that the elected member should be from the locality as well.
28. A small number of responses (7) suggested that the best person to represent their interests was the person who would be most effective, although how that might be assessed was not specified. It was noted that the best person might also depend on the issue in question.
29. Nevertheless, the view of the great majority was that 'local is best'.
30. We then asked participants whom they would approach if they had a problem. Everyone who made a positive response, with one exception, said their constituency member, who was often mentioned by name (this may be because in the introduction to the discussion they had been informed of the names of all the Assembly members for the area). Respondents said that constituency members were best placed to help, and in a number of cases they had met the constituency member e.g. through contact with the community group in which the respondent was involved.
31. Only one person mentioned a regional list member, because she was known personally by the respondent. One respondent mentioned their MP and one mentioned the Minister for Health and Social Services as that was a subject of particular interest to the respondent.

Figure 3 Responses on representation

Some people say that the constituency member is the best able to represent the interests of local people. Others say that any of the Assembly members can represent local people's interests. What do you think?

Constituency member best represents interests

It is better if it is the local constituency member. They understand the area and can get things done. *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

Local member is better because they can represent their gang, if you know what I mean. The others are not as interested in the area. Will only help if forced to. *Swansea East – Luncheon Club, Brunswick Church*

The constituency member probably should be the best. *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

The local can represent you best as they know how to deal with local problems and people. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

The local person understands the issues. They can represent the area – especially if they live nearby. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

I like Jeffrey Cuthbert – local is better. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

The local member should know more about the problems in the area. *Caerphilly – Hafal group, Hyderus, Bargoed*

The constituency member is better as they know more about the local area *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

The one that lives locally is better due to the fact that they do live local and understand the place better. *Caerphilly – Kick Youth group*

The constituency member can understand local grievances. *Llanelli Disabled drivers centre*

I think that the constituency member is the best one to know about the local area and local things that happen. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

Constituency member best at representing the area because they know the local area and can meet those needs. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

Any AM for the area

Anyone but it's whether they do or not. *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

If you can't get the result you want from the first person you go to, try the next person. It doesn't really matter who it is. *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

It should be the person who can deal with the problem regardless who it is. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

Whoever can deal with the issue. It shouldn't really matter when it comes to it. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

I suppose it depends on what you want done *Caerphilly – Kick Youth group*

5. DUAL CANDIDACY

32. The current system allows individual candidates to stand in the constituency election and also to be a political party representative on the regional list. Concern about 'dual candidacy' was first voiced formally in the report of the Richard Commission, which comments that:

*'the freedom for candidates to stand for both constituency and party regional seats is seen as a weakness'*⁷

33. The report then goes on to provide three quotes which elaborate concerns about dual candidacy as follows:

'how it can be right that .. candidates who are defeated in the first past the post ballot can then be elected under the regional list ballot',

'dual candidacy can confuse the electorate who may wish to consciously reject a particular candidate on to find them elected via the list'

'no less than 17 out of the 20 AMs elected from lists were candidates who lost constituency contests.'

34. The report counters these arguments by suggesting that preventing dual candidacy might affect the vigour of campaigning and the quality of candidates:

*'preventing candidates from standing in both regional and constituency ballots might mean that regional candidates would do no active campaigning and the parties would be deterred from fielding strong candidates in marginal seats (preferring to keep them on the List) thus reducing voter choice.'*⁸

35. The Richard Commission concludes that adjustments to the Additional Member System will not overcome the inherent problems in the system and instead advocates changing the method of proportional representation (as well as increasing the number of members).

36. The Government's White Paper 'Better Governance for Wales'⁹ repeats the principal concerns about dual candidacy, noting that dual candidacy does:

'little to enhance the credibility of the electoral process or the voters' level of engagement with it.'

It goes on to claim that it causes:

'considerable confusion among the electorate that list members can set up constituency offices and seek to deal with constituency case work as a 'local member' in competition with the constituency member.'

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37. Whilst there have been numerous comments on, and challenges to the assertions made in the White Paper,¹⁰ there has been very little rigorous analysis or research evidence. For example, the quotations in the Richard's Commission report that express anxiety about dual candidacy are in fact from the Secretary of State for Wales, Dr Denis Balsom – a political analyst, and the Electoral Reform Society – all informative but hardly the views of the public. The Electoral Reform Society's response to the Better Governance White Paper¹¹ acknowledges the lack of evidence to justify preventing dual candidacy. They then cite their attitudinal research about voting in the 2003 election in which voters did not volunteer concern. They conclude that this silence suggests 'low public salience of the issue' - not a particularly robust basis from which to draw a conclusion.
 38. A different approach is that taken by Dr Jonathan Bradbury and Dr Meg Russell in their written evidence to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee's Inquiry into the Better Governance White Paper¹². This provides a refreshing critique of the debate to date and gives some alternative views about dual candidacy, along with some empirical evidence although not on public opinion on the subject.
 39. We therefore aimed to explore views about dual candidacy in the interview groups, albeit at a very modest scale. We asked participants whether they thought it unfair that the candidates who did not win the constituency vote are then elected for the region, or whether candidates should be free to stand in both ballots.
 40. A selection of quotations is given in Figure 4. In numerical terms, slightly more of the total number of responses said that dual candidacy was unfair compared with those who felt candidates should be free to stand in both, and a small number of respondents (5) were unsure.
 41. The reasons given for the view that dual candidacy was unfair primarily centred around perceptions that election via regional list circumvented the electorate's wishes in the constituency ballot - 'sneaking in the back door' and 'having a second bite of the cherry'. There were a small number of responses that suggested that the regional list candidates did not have to work so hard, that the regional list seats were jobs for the sake of it, and that questioned the legitimacy of representatives elected this way.
 42. Concern was expressed about regional list representatives claiming to speak for the constituency, even when that representative had been defeated in the constituency ballot. This was very clearly put in one discussion group in Llanelli, where the sitting Assembly member had been defeated in the constituency election but was then elected through the regional list. Llanelli is part of the Mid and West Wales region, and its regional list votes are combined with those of Brecon and Radnorshire, Carmarthenshire East and Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire West and South Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, Montgomeryshire and Preseli Pembrokeshire. The comments below were made by participants at Llanelli Disabled Drivers' Centre, in fact in response to the question about first past the post, but highly relevant here too:

I can't see how it is possible to have two AMs to represent us. Can't let people go in the back door. It should be one voice elected by the people.

It should be the one with the most votes obviously. If that's what people voted for.

People shouldn't be allowed to speak for the area like Llanelli when they weren't chosen.

43. A substantial minority of responses supported dual candidacy, commenting that it was fair for people to have a second chance, that it gave voters a choice and that it spread power. It was regarded as part of the democratic system and essentially 'not a problem'.
44. These responses suggest that the public's views on dual candidacy are divided between those in favour and those against. There was a small majority who perceived that dual candidacy is 'unfair', but a significant minority felt that it was right and reasonable to allow candidates to stand in both ballots. This should not be a surprise as it follows a similar pattern to public attitudes to proportional representation in general.
45. However, we should not conclude from the apparent split of public opinion that there is no cause for concern. We have identified, albeit on a very small scale and in a statistically unrepresentative sample, that there is considerable public disquiet about the issue of dual candidacy.

Figure 4 Responses about dual candidacy

Some people say that it is unfair that the candidates who do not win the constituency vote are then elected for the region. Other people say that candidates should be free to stand in both ballots. What do you think?

Against standing in both

I think it is unfair ... It's like people can sneak in the back door. *Swansea East - GSP Partnership, St Thomas' Church*

It does seem unfair in a way, surely if they weren't popular enough they shouldn't be able to get in. *Swansea East – Luncheon Club, Brunswick Church*

I'm not sure. It does seem a little suspicious. *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

Actually I didn't realize that. It seems unfair – like resitting your exams or something. *Caerphilly – Homestart Young Mothers, Millennium Community Centre*

It should be first past the post. One choice instead of getting to stand for both. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

It doesn't seem right that they can stand for both somehow. Makes it too confusing for everyday people. *Caerphilly – Hafal group, Hyderus, Bargoed*

They should choose perhaps. They should have to decide. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

You don't have two bites of the cherry. *Llanelli Disabled drivers centre*

I don't think some should have the added advantage of standing in both – it seems unfair really. Politics is all shrouded in big speak anyway. It would be easier if it was more commonsense and less jargon. I think they want us to be stupid about it so they confuse the issue *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

It shouldn't really be allowed as it seems unfair. How can it be right that you vote one way and then the person who loses can still find a way to get elected? *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

In favour of standing in both

Standing in both is fine. Some might be better than others and deserve a second chance. They could still do a good job. *Swansea East – Luncheon Club, Brunswick Church*

Its fine that they stand in both – can't see a problem in that. *Swansea East – Bonymaen Luncheon Club*

It is good that people have more than one chance. *Caerphilly – Rhymney Valley Mind, Ystrad Mynach*

It seems ok. *Caerphilly – BURD, Hafal group Caerphilly*

They should be free to stand in both ballots – that seems fair enough. *Caerphilly – Kick Youth group*

That means that the power is spread out which can make more of a difference in the end. *Caerphilly – Hafal group*

I can't see anything really wrong with being able to stand in both – just make sure the best one gets the right job – it doesn't really matter. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Parent Toddler Group*

I actually believe that people should be allowed to be elected in this case – that's the fairest way. *Llanelli – AntiOct Centre Drug Rehab group*

6. Conclusions

46. This small scale project has sought to investigate whether there appears to be evidence of public disquiet about dual candidacy in constituency and regional list elections to the National Assembly for Wales.
47. We have found that there is undoubtedly some public concern about whether candidates should be allowed to stand in constituency as well as regional list ballots. While some felt it was reasonable and beneficial to allow 'two chances' and for 'everyone to have a say', a slightly higher proportion regarded it as being elected 'by the backdoor' and 'suspicious'. Concern was voiced in particular about regional list assembly members who had lost the constituency election then claiming to speak for that constituency subsequently. We would suggest that these findings indicate that at the very least there is a need for further, statistically representative, research to ensure that public policy and debate is fully informed. Any proposals about dual candidacy will need to have regard to people's legitimate concerns.
48. We have also found that whether respondents were in favour of proportional representation or not, the vast majority saw the constituency member being best placed to represent their interests and would approach him or her if they had a problem to bring to their attention. This clearly indicates that there are issues to be resolved about the role and relative legitimacy of the two categories of members, which some have suggested should be addressed through some form of code of practice or guidance. Again, we would suggest that there is a need for further research about this subject.
49. These views were part of wider attitudes to the electoral process, which, as expected, indicated a lack of understanding about the Assembly's electoral system and divided opinions about the first-past-the-post system compared with proportional representation.

Annex 1 Profiles of Case Study Constituencies

Llanelli Constituency

Electorate 57,428
Valid Turn out 40.3%

Constituency Election

Catherine Thomas	Labour	9,916	
Helen Mary Jones	PC	9,895**	<i>elected via regional list</i>
Kenneth Rees	Welsh Lib Dems	1,644	
Gareth Jones	Conservative	1,712	
Total votes cast		23,167	

Second vote result – mid and west Wales

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Region</u>
Welsh Labour Party	9,761	46,451
Plaid Cymru	8,136	51,847
Welsh Liberal Democrats	1,648	30,177
Welsh Conservative Party	1,830	35,566
Independent Wales	150	1,324
Green Party	659	7,794
Mid and West Wales Pensioners	461	3,968
Prolife Alliance	60	383
UKIP	396	5,945
Vote 2 stop the War	75	716
Total regional votes cast	23,176	184,198

Regional AMs elected – mid and west Wales

Nicholas Bourne	Welsh Conservative Party
Edward Glyn Davies	Welsh Conservative Party
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru
Elizabeth Ann Francis	Welsh Conservative Party

Swansea East

Electorate 57,252

Valid Turn out 30.4%

Constituency Election

Val Lloyd	Labour	8,821	
Peter Black	Welsh Lib Dems	4,224	<i>elected via regional list</i>
Dewi Evans	Plaid Cymru	2,223	
Peter Morris	Conservative	1,135	
David Alan Morrison	UKIP	1,474	
Alan Thompson	Welsh Socialist Alliance	133	
Total votes cast		17,410	

Second vote result South Wales West

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Region</u>
Welsh Labour Party	7,480	58,066
Plaid Cymru	2,484	24,799
Welsh Liberal Democrats	3,462	17,746
Welsh Conservative Party	1,323	29,981
Independent Wales	145	1,346
Green Party	687	6,696
Prolife Alliance	25	355
UKIP	1,263	6,113
Socialist Labour Party	463	3,446
Total regional votes cast	17,322	139,548

Regional AMs elected

Peter Black	Welsh Liberal Democrats
Alun Cairns	Welsh Conservative Party
Janet Davies	Plaid Cymru
David Lloyd	Plaid Cymru

Caerphilly

Electorate 68,152

Valid turn out 37.3%

Constituency Election

Jeffrey Cuthbert	Labour	11,898
Lindsey Whittle	Plaid Cymru	6,919
Laura Jones	Conservative	2,570
Rob Roffe	Welsh Lib Dems	1,281
Anne Blackman	Independent	1,204
Avril Dafydd-Lewis	Caerphilly Constituency Independents	930
Brenda Vipass	UKIP	590
Total votes cast		25,387

Second vote result – south Wales east

	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Region</u>
Welsh Labour Party	11,956	76,522
Plaid Cymru	5,893	21,384
Welsh Liberal Democrats	1,907	17,661
Welsh Conservative Party	2,895	34,231
Independent Wales	280	1,226
Green Party	613	5,291
Prolife Alliance	96	562
UKIP	863	5,949
Socialist Labour Party	549	3,695
British National Party	326	3,210
Total regional votes cast	17,322	169,731

Regional AMs elected

Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru
Mike German	Welsh Liberal Democrats
William Graham	Welsh Conservative Party
Laura Jones	Welsh Conservative Party

Annex 2 Questionnaire

THE BEVAN FOUNDATION

ASSEMBLY ELECTION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name of group: _____

Constituency: Llanelli / Swansea East / Caerphilly

Contact details _____

Date of interview _____ Time: _____

No. of participants _____ Other Comments _____

Introduction

Thank you very much for sparing the time to talk to me.

My name is _____ and I am working for a charity called the Bevan Foundation, which looks at different subjects that concern people in Wales today.

At the moment they are doing a project on people's understanding of elections to the National Assembly for Wales. We are NOT asking you about how you voted or your views of political parties.

The results will be published in December.

What you say is completely anonymous and there will be nothing in the report that will mean you can be identified.

Introduction

At the last election, five Assembly members were elected for this area.

One, _____, was elected because he / she got the largest number of votes for this constituency.

The others, _____, were elected by adding up all the votes for this region and then sharing out the seats between the parties according to their share of the vote. These Assembly members are sometimes called the 'regional list' members.

- 1. Some people say that this system is confusing. Other people say that it is easy to understand once they are used to it. Do you find it easy to understand or confusing?**
- 2. Some people say that this system makes sure the results reflect the views of everyone voting. Other people say that only the person with the most votes should be elected. What do you think?**
- 3. Some people say that the constituency member is best able to represent the interests of local people. Others say that any of the assembly members can represent local people's interests. What do you think?**
- 4. Some people say that it is unfair that candidates who do not win the constituency vote are then elected for the region. Other people say that candidates should be free to stand in both ballots. What do you think?**
- 5. If you were going to approach an Assembly member for help with a problem, who would you approach? Why would you chose that member?**

6. Finally, could I just ask you to tell me a little bit about yourself.

In which age group are you? (read out)

Participant

		1	2	3	4	5
Age (<i>Tick box</i>)	18-24					
	25 -44					
	45-64					
	65+					

And are you working or not? (Probe status)

		1	2	3	4	5
Employment (<i>Tick box</i>)	Working full time					
	Working part time					
	Retired					
	Student					
	Unemployed / longterm sick / caring / other					

Thank you very much for your help. If you want to contact the Bevan Foundation for any further information here are their details (*hand out card*)

END NOTES

¹ Wales Office (2005) *Better Governance for Wales*, Cm 6582, HMSO

² Richard Commission (2004) *Commission on the Powers and Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales*, TSO

³ John Curtice, Ben Seyd, Alison Park and Katarina Thomson (2000), *Fond Hearts and Wise Heads? Attitudes to Proportional Representation following the 1999 Scottish and Welsh Elections*, Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends

⁴ The Electoral Commission (2003), *The National Assembly for Wales elections 2003 – the official report and results*, National Assembly for Wales

⁵ NOP Research Group (2003), *National Assembly for Wales Election 2003 Opinion Research*.

⁶ Richard Commission, *op cit.*, Chap 12 para 21

⁷ Richard Commission, *op cit.*, Chap 12

⁸ Richard Commission Chap 12 para 20

⁹ Wales Office (2005) *Better Governance for Wales*, Cm 6582, HMSO

¹⁰ see in particular the Electoral Reform Society's response and that of the Electoral Commission, available on <http://www.walesoffice.gov.uk/bgfw.html>

¹¹ Electoral Reform Society (2005) *Much Better Governance for Wales*, available on <http://www.walesoffice.gov.uk/bgfw.html>

¹² House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee (2005) *Inquiry into Better Governance for Wales White Paper*, December 2005