
#  Welsh Government: Votes for Prisoners

## Organisation/ department background

The **Welsh Government** is the devolved government for Wales, and is responsible for a wide range of policy areas including:

* education
* health
* local government
* transport
* planning
* economic development
* social care
* culture
* environment
* agriculture and rural affairs.
* tourism

The role of the Welsh Government is to make decisions on matters regarding these areas, for Wales as a whole, develop policies and implement them, and propose Welsh laws. Civil Servants in the Welsh Government serve Welsh Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers working on matters devolved to Wales.

The UK government is still responsible for certain public services in Wales, for example police, prisons and the justice system. Matters such as tax and benefits, defence, national security and foreign affairs are also dealt with by the UK Government.

Further information on the Welsh Government is available at: <http://wales.gov.uk>

The intern will be based partly in the Local Government and Democracy Division and Knowledge and Analysis Services, working closely with both social researchers and policy professionals. The internship would provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing and making presentations), and to enhance policy knowledge.

More information about statistics and research at the Welsh Government:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/?lang=en>

## Background

## The Welsh Government is in the process of drafting a Local Government Bill for introduction to the National Assembly in the summer of 2018. This follows a number of consultative exercises, most recently – and relevantly – this one: <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reforming-local-government-resilient-and-renewed>

The consultation presents proposals to improve the operation of local government in Wales through providing services in a collaborative fashion and through improvements to governance and public accountability.

As a result of the passing of the Wales Act 2017, the extent of the National Assembly’s and Welsh Government’s devolved functions has increased considerably. For the first time, responsibility for Assembly and local elections lies in Wales, not Westminster. A separate consultation is taking place on proposals for electoral reform: <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/electoral-reform-local-government-wales>. It is the intention that any legislation required to legislate for electoral reforms would be included in the aforesaid Local Government Bill.

Amongst the reforms being considered are ones which could extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, all foreign nationals legally resident in Wales and prisoners. Any reforms are intended to take effect in time for the next local elections due in 2022.

## Project brief

The **aim** of this project is to provide a better understanding of how prisoners could be enabled to vote and how successfully prisoner voting operates in countries which allow it already.

The **objectives** of this project are to:-

* Consider the proposals to introduce prisoner voting in the UK and the main obstacles to doing this;
* Examine the extent to which prisoner voting takes place internationally, the difficulties confronted in introducing it and the extent to which the entitlement is taken up;
* Explore how citizens of countries which allow prisoner voting are enabled to vote if they are detained in UK prisons.
* Engage with representatives of relevant organisations (e.g. Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators, Prison Reform Trust and the Prison Service) to seek their views on the desirability and practicality of introducing prisoner voting.

The project requires one intern for a period of 3 months.

**The anticipated project outcomes**

* A full and summary report of the research findings and a presentation of results to policy and research colleagues.

**Student specification**

The student must have necessary skills both to design a workable and effective piece of research to meet the objectives and to gather and analyse the mainly secondary research evidence. There could be opportunities and advantages to be had through discussions with representatives of the UK and other governments. Although the project naturally lends itself more to a qualitative researcher, it will not require specialist qualitative research skills.

The student will need the ability to produce concise, well written documents presenting complex material to a non-technical audience.

## Start date of Internship

## January 2018 (exact start date negotiable)

## Security

The Welsh Government’s vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff) involve the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire for the process of security vetting to Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), Security Check (SC) and Developed Vetting (DV).

Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) requires the applicant to produce in person, 3 original forms of Identification Documents, one of which should be photographic (passport, new driving license), one document should show the current address and the third form of ID could be an utility bill, birth certificate, P45 or P60.

## Queries

Any queries relating to the project should be directed to:

Frank Cuthbert (frank.cuthbert@wales.gov)