



GfK NOP Social Research

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Research Report:
**Powers of the National Assembly for Wales –
Referendum Question Testing**

GfK NOP Social Research, August 2010

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

By the end of March 2011, a referendum will be held in Wales on whether to give the National Assembly for Wales full law-making powers. The Electoral Commission asked GfK NOP to test voter understanding of the draft question.¹ The research aimed to:

- Identify any elements of the referendum question which prove problematic for users in the context of the Commission's question assessment guidelines
- Explore reasons for these problems
- Explore possible ways of addressing these problems
- Examine public awareness of the powers of the Assembly and explore public understanding of the impact referendum outcomes will have on this

A qualitative approach involving a total of eight focus groups and 20 depth interviews, carried out across Wales, was used to test the referendum question. Both the Welsh and English language versions of the question were tested. All research was carried out between 7th and 15th July 2010. Please note that, unless otherwise stated, all findings apply to both the Welsh and English language versions of the question.

This report presents findings from the research carried out by GfK NOP; the views expressed are not those of the Electoral Commission.

1.2 Background Awareness

Respondents' knowledge of the background issues and terminology necessary for a full understanding of the referendum question was limited. Many were unfamiliar with the concept of devolution and most respondents had a limited understanding of the powers of the NAW. With the exception of a few high profile initiatives, such as free prescriptions, reduced tuition fees and free swimming, the majority were not sure which policy areas the NAW had legislative power over. Furthermore, many were not aware of the legislative mechanics of the NAW and did not know that the Assembly could gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the UK Parliament.²

A minority were aware that a referendum on the powers of the Assembly was due to take place in 2011. These respondents tended to be older (35+), had previously voted in NAW elections and were more likely to follow Welsh political issues in the news. Welsh language

¹ The full question used in the research is shown on page 10.

² Young people aged 17-24 demonstrated the lowest levels of awareness, while previous NAW voters demonstrated the highest levels of awareness.

speakers had slightly higher levels of awareness of the forthcoming referendum than non-Welsh speakers.

One consequence of respondents' lack of awareness of devolution, the powers of the Assembly and the subject of the forthcoming referendum was that they came to the research with many misconceptions about what the question would be asking them. For instance, some assumed that the question was about independence for Wales or an increase in the tax raising powers of the Assembly and answered it in this way. While these misconceptions may be resolved by any campaigning and information presented to the electorate before March 2011, it was clear that the question in its current form was not challenging or resolving these misconceptions adequately.

1.3 Interpretation of the Question

Having read the referendum question, the vast majority could see that it was asking them to decide whether or not the law-making powers of the NAW should be increased. Nevertheless, most had difficulty identifying the exact nature of the increase in law-making powers proposed. A range of interpretations were provided, including the following:

- Full independence for Wales
- Tax raising powers for the NAW
- Introduction of new devolved areas
- Removal of Parliamentary approval for laws made in existing devolved areas
- An increase in law-making powers of the NAW in deprived / developing areas of Wales

Those who believed the question was asking about independence for Wales or tax raising powers for the Assembly tended to come to the question with this assumption already in mind and did not have their misconceptions challenged by the question. Those who believed the question was about introducing new devolved areas were usually confused about the use of the words '*devolved areas*' in the question and misinterpreted their meaning when reading the question. Those who thought the question was asking about increasing the Assembly's powers in deprived or developing areas of Wales did so because they misinterpreted the words '*devolved areas*', but took them to mean 'deprived' or 'developing areas'.

Those who thought the question was about the removal of Parliamentary approval for laws made in existing devolved areas came closest to an accurate understanding of the question. These respondents tended to be older (35+) NAW Voters. There was no significant difference in the proportion of English and Welsh language speakers within this category. They recognised that, at present, the NAW needed Parliamentary approval to make certain laws and that the question was asking whether the need for approval should be removed.

However, a few individuals who had a good understanding of the subject of the referendum prior to attending the research (i.e. who thought it was about the removal of Parliamentary approval for laws made in existing devolved areas) came to doubt this understanding after reading the question. In these instances, the question was not supporting or reinforcing the knowledge these individuals' had built up prior to the research. This calls into question the

suitability of the question in its current form and shows that poor awareness of devolution and the powers of the NAW was not the only reason for people misinterpreting the referendum question. The impact on understanding of the question structure, as well as individual words and phrases, also had an impact.

A) Question Structure

Most respondents believed that the existing question structure should be retained. Given the gaps in awareness of devolution and the NAW's current powers, a preamble supporting the referendum question itself (i.e. paragraph three) was required. There was a consensus that the following elements should be retained:

- A short and clear title
- An account of the current legislative arrangements
- An indication of how legislative arrangements would be affected if a Yes / No vote was given
- A short and clear question

However, a range of structural problems were identified and these include the following:

- Overall question length
- Sentence length and complexity
- Distinction between present and future scenarios

Across the sample, respondents believed the overall question was too long. When reading it, many found that they lost the gist of the question and had to read individual sections a number of times before they were able to piece together its meaning. There were frequent complaints that the question was repetitive and respondents wondered whether repeated sections could be dispensed with. For instance, the second sentence in the second paragraph of the English language question was seen as overlong and confusing. The number of clauses and the amount of recursion (embedding of a sentence within another sentence) in this sentence made it quite difficult for many people to understand.

When reading the preamble, some found it difficult to distinguish the present legislative arrangements from possible future arrangements (i.e. following the outcome of the referendum). While most understood that the first two sentences of paragraph one were describing present arrangements, some believed the third sentence was describing a possible future arrangement. Similarly, by placing information about Yes and No outcomes together in paragraph two, the question was seen to confuse a future scenario (the Yes outcome) with a description of the current arrangements (the No outcome).

Distinguishing between the present arrangements and possible future arrangement was made even more difficult for many Welsh language readers, as the words used in the third sentence of paragraph one (*'Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau'*) were often unfamiliar to them.



B) Words & Phrases

English Language Question

'Devolved areas'

The most commonly misunderstood phrase in the English language question was 'devolved areas'. Because many respondents did not understand the concept of devolution and did not have a clear idea of what 'devolved areas' meant, they often interpreted this phrase as referring to geographical areas within Wales that were either deprived or developing. This led some to understand the overall question as asking about whether the NAW should have more powers over these geographical areas. This misunderstanding was compounded by the phrase being repeated five times throughout the question, which made understanding the question without knowing what this phrase meant very difficult. Some admitted that they had simply ignored the phrase and tried to guess at the overall meaning of the question without reference to it.

'If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.'

This sentence (paragraph two, sentence two) was seen as overlong and over complicated. Many got lost when reading it due to the number of clauses it contained (five in total) and did not fully grasp its meaning as a result. In addition, many did not like the way the sentence seemed to switch between formal and informal tones (for instance, '*...The present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power...*'; was seen as highly formal language, while the subsequent phrase, '*bit by bit*', was seen as very informal) and felt that this juxtaposition made the sentence difficult to read.

'Subject by subject / bit by bit'

Some found the use of '*subject by subject*' (paragraph one, sentence three) and '*bit by bit*' (paragraph two, sentence two) to describe the process of transferring law making powers from Parliament to the Assembly confusing. The slightly different wording led them to doubt whether the two sentences were describing the same process or not.

Welsh Language Question

'Meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli' ('Devolved areas')

'*Datganoli*' was an unfamiliar word to many respondents, especially among the younger age groups. These respondents did feel able to work out the meaning of the sentence based on the contextual information provided but it was apparent that respondents were sometimes incorrectly guessing at the meaning of the word. The '*meysydd*' part of the phrase was problematic due to its unfamiliarity. This, coupled with the word '*datganoli*', caused many Welsh language readers to re-read the passage and compare it with the English version to work out its meaning.



'Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau' ('The Assembly can gain further powers')

The meaning of this third sentence of paragraph one was not clear to most Welsh language readers. The word '*caiff*' was unfamiliar (paragraph one, sentence three) and this led some respondents to initially read the sentence as '*the Assembly will gain powers*', therefore confusing the present and potential future arrangements.

'bob yn damaid' (bit by bit)

This phrase was not seen as common parlance and there was a strong feeling that it could be made more intelligible to Welsh language readers.

Unfamiliar words: 'fesul'; 'i ddeddfu' and 'gwasanaethau cymdeithasol'

The words '*fesul*', '*i ddeddfu*' and '*gwasanaethau cymdeithasol*' posed problems for some respondents. Their unfamiliarity with these words meant that they had to refer to the English version to understand their meaning, leading to a far slower pace of reading.

C) Question Layout

No difficulties were reported with the question layout. All found the division of the question into a title, preamble, question and answer boxes to be easy to follow and all found the division of the page into Welsh and English versions to be appropriate.

Two interviews were carried out amongst people with visual impairments. One of these respondents had a moderate visual impairment and although he was able to read the question in its current format said that he would have preferred to use a large print version. The other respondent was profoundly blind and was not able to read the question at all. An audio version of the question would be required in order for this respondent to vote in the referendum.

In addition, the four respondents who did not speak English or Welsh as a first language would have preferred for the question to be provided in their first language. While all four could understand the question in English, they struggled with words such as 'devolved areas.'

1.4 Neutrality of the Question

On first reading, very few respondents commented that the question was leading them to give a particular answer. It was only after they were prompted to look for any leading elements that these were identified. Where leading elements were identified (on both the Welsh and English versions), these were seen to lead voters towards a Yes outcome. No elements leading voters to a No outcome were identified.

The following elements were seen as leading people to vote Yes:

- Paragraph two:
 - > Description of the Yes outcome came first, placing greater emphasis on a Yes result than a No result
 - > Description of the No outcome was somewhat hidden in the paragraph (sentence two)
 - > The Yes outcome was described in a simple and straightforward way and was easy to understand, whereas the No outcome was described in a complicated way that was more difficult to understand
 - > Wording of the Yes description gave a sense of positive change (*'...gain powers to make laws...'* / *'...ennill pwerau i ddeddfu...'*) whereas wording of the No description was more negative and gave a sense of stasis or slow, incremental change (*'...bit by bit...'* / *'...bob yn damaid ... bob tro...'*)
- Paragraph three:
 - > *'Do you agree...'* / *'Ydych chi'n cytuno...'* was seen as prompting a Yes response by implying that the question was partial (i.e. that it was really asking *'Do you agree with me...?'*)

Overall, it was apparent that barriers to understanding (e.g. the confusion around *'devolved areas'* / *'Meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli'*) were more problematic than any of the potentially leading elements described above."

1.5 Accuracy of Response

Most respondents were able to vote in line with their intentions.³ Even those who did not understand the question on first reading stated that they had given the response they would have done had they understood it fully at the outset. This indicates that although most were able to vote in line with their intentions, many would have walked away from the research with an inaccurate perception of what the referendum was about and its possible outcomes had this not been explained.

A few respondents stated that they had not been able to answer the question in line with their intentions. These respondents initially believed that the question was asking about a larger increase in the powers of the NAW than it actually was (either independence for Wales or tax raising powers). They did not want the NAW's powers to be increased to this extent and had given a No answer. However, they did admit that if they had understood the true meaning of the question and the limitations in the powers being voted on, they would have voted Yes. It is therefore evident that the question may cause voters who are in favour of a limited increase in the powers of the NAW (in line with the referendum question) but who believe the

³ This was because many had very clear views on whether or not the NAW should have more powers or not and would have voted the same way (whether Yes or No) had the question been about independence, tax raising powers, new devolved areas or removal of Parliamentary approval in existing devolved areas.

referendum question is actually asking about a more substantial increase in powers than this to give an answer that is not in line with their intentions.

1.6 Fit with Question Assessment Guidelines

The research found that the question proved problematic for users in relation to a number of the criteria outlined in the Commission's question assessment guidelines. In particular, most respondents did not find the question easy to understand, and certain key words and phrases were found to be ambiguous.

1.7 Suggested Changes

Taking into account all aspects of the discussion above, this research suggests that the following changes would improve understanding of the referendum question:

- **Question structure**
 - > Reduce overall question length (word count) where possible
 - > Reduce repetition and where there is repetition, avoid inconsistencies in language used
 - On the English version, avoid inconsistent repetition between paragraph one, sentence three (*'subject by subject'*) and paragraph two, sentence two, (*'bit by bit'*)
 - On the Welsh version, reduce repetition between the end of paragraph one, sentence one and the start of sentence two (where *'meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli'* is repeated word for word on two separate lines)
 - > Reduce sentence length and complexity where possible (especially in paragraph two, sentence two)
 - > Clearly separate current legislative arrangements from possible future arrangements
 - > Clearly separate explanation of Yes and No outcomes (paragraph two)
 - > Boldly state that the referendum question is not asking about independence for Wales or increased tax raising powers for the NAW
- **Individual words & phrases**
 - > English language question
 - Clearly explain meaning of *'devolved areas'* (perhaps emphasising examples of devolved areas with bullet points) or omit this phrase
 - Simplify paragraph two, sentence two (describing the No outcome) to enhance understanding
 - Harmonise formality of language throughout the question and avoid very informal language (e.g. *'bit by bit'* in paragraph two, sentence two)
 - > Welsh language question

- Clearly explain meaning of *'meysydd wedi'u datganoli'*, and consider alternatives for the word *'meysydd'*
- Re-word paragraph one, sentence three to clarify that it refers to current powers. Seek an alternative to opening the sentence with the word *'caiff'*
- Where possible use simpler, more commonly used words to replace *'i deddfu'*, *'fesul'*, *'bob yn damaid'* and *'gwasanaethau cymdeithasol'*

In addition, the following changes would improve the **neutrality** of the question:

- Clearly separate descriptions of the Yes and No outcomes so that the No description does not appear hidden in any way
- Ensure the Yes and No outcomes are described with the same level of clarity and with the same emotional tone (principally by simplifying paragraph two, sentence two)
- Reconsider use of the phrase *'Do you agree...'* / *'Ydych chi'n cytuno...'* in the question itself (paragraph three), which may appear leading; *'Should the Assembly have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas...?'* / *'Dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau i ddeddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli...?'* was seen as more neutral

In implementing these, or any other changes, the Electoral Commission should have regard to the low levels of awareness of devolution and the powers of the NAW found in this research. Taking these into account, any revisions to the question wording should bear the following considerations in mind:

- **It is extremely important that the question does not confuse voters.** Many respondents could not say what the powers of the NAW were or how this referendum would affect them. Given this, a question which articulates the choice voters have in a straightforward manner and minimises any confusion in their mind is essential.
- **The question wording must be clear and intelligible.** Many respondents were easily confused and distracted by words they could not understand such as 'devolution' and 'devolved areas'. Keeping the language of the question simple and avoiding, minimising or explaining any difficult words and phrases would help to avoid this.
- **Some explanation of the current legislative arrangements is required.** Because respondents often did not know about the powers of the NAW or the legislative relationship between the NAW and the UK Parliament, this should be made clear in the referendum question. Voters who are not familiar with the present arrangements will struggle to fully understand a question that does not explain them.
- **A clear explanation of Yes and No outcomes is needed.** A simple and coherent explanation of Yes and No outcomes is required to help voters understand the impact of their answer. This should help to overcome confusion concerning the subject of the referendum (e.g. the belief of some respondents that it is about independence or tax raising powers).



- **Emphasise what the referendum is not about.** Some respondents had a firmly entrenched belief that the referendum question was about independence for Wales or giving the Assembly tax raising powers. In order to tackle this, it may be worth explicitly stating that this is not that case and that the referendum is about extending the NAW's powers within the devolved areas.



2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Electoral Commission is an independent body established by the UK Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Its aim is to maintain the integrity of and public confidence in the democratic process. Specifically, the Commission works to:

- Register political parties
- Make sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
- Publish details of where parties and candidates get money from and how they spend it
- Set the standards for running elections and report on how well this is done
- Make sure people understand it is important to register to vote, and know how to vote

Under PERA, the Commission is required to comment on the intelligibility of referendum questions at a UK, national and regional level. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Commission to be consulted on the intelligibility of questions used in local referendums on changing the executive arrangements of local authorities.

In 2009, following a report from the All Wales Convention (AWC), the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) passed a motion to hold a referendum on whether to give the NAW full law-making powers. The Secretary of State for Wales was required to consult the Electoral Commission on the intelligibility of the referendum question. Once primary legislation was passed and a question drafted, the Commission asked GfK NOP to carry out research to investigate the referendum question's intelligibility with voters across Wales. This document reports findings from this research.

2.2 Objectives

The research investigated voters' understanding of the proposed referendum question. It examined whether the question was written in a way that voters could understand and answer in line with their intentions. Specifically, the research aimed to:

- Identify any elements of the referendum question which prove problematic for users in the context of the Commission's question assessment guidelines
- Explore reasons for these problems
- Explore possible ways of addressing these problems
- Examine public awareness of the powers of the Assembly and explore public understanding of the impact referendum outcomes will have on this



2.3 The Referendum Question

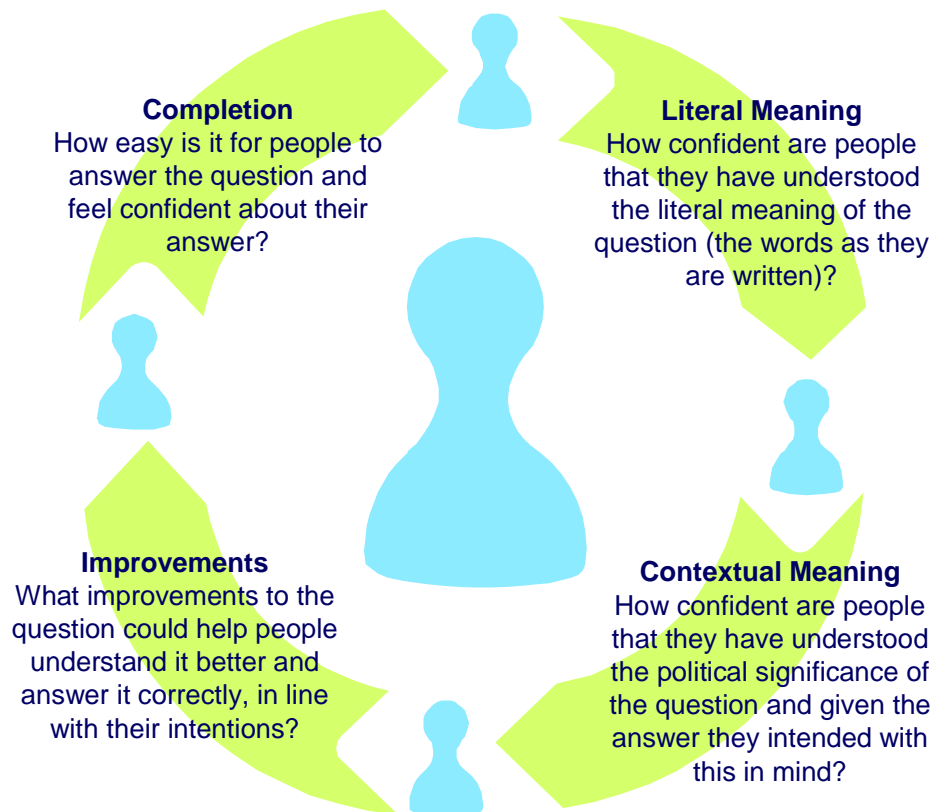
Refferendwm ar bwerau deddfu Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	Referendum on law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales
<p>Ar hyn o bryd, mae gan y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol (y Cynulliad) y pwerau i ddeddfu ar gyfer Cymru ar rai pynciau mewn meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli. Mae'r meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli yn cynnwys iechyd, addysg, gwasanaethau cymdeithasol, llywodraeth leol a'r amgylchedd. Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau i ddeddfu mewn meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli trwy gael cytundeb gan Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig, a hynny fesul pwnc.</p>	<p>At present, the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) has powers to make laws for Wales on some subjects within devolved areas. Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment. The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis.</p>
<p>Os bydd y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn pleidleisio 'Ydw' yn y refferendwm hwn, bydd y Cynulliad yn ennill pwerau i ddeddfu ar bob pwnc yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli. Os bydd y rhan fwyaf yn pleidleisio 'Nac Ydw', bydd y trefniadau presennol - sef trosglwyddo'r hawl i ddeddfu bob yn ddaid, gyda chytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig bob tro - yn parhau.</p>	<p>If most people vote Yes in this referendum, the Assembly will gain powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas. If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.</p>
<p>Ydych chi'n cytuno y dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau yn awr i ddeddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli heb fod angen cytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig yn gyntaf?</p>	<p>Do you agree that the Assembly should now have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas without needing the agreement of Parliament first?</p>
<p>RHOWCH X MEWN UN BLWCH YN UNIG</p>	<p>PUT AN X IN ONE BOX ONLY</p>
<p>Ydw, rydw i'n cytuno - Yes, I agree</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Nac ydw, dydw i ddim yn cytuno - No, I do not agree</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.4 Research Approach

2.4.1 Method

A qualitative approach involving a total of eight focus groups and 20 depth interviews was used. All research was carried out between 7th and 15th July 2010.

The research approach aimed to analyse voter understanding from a range of perspectives (as shown in the diagram below). Qualitative techniques were the most appropriate for achieving this, as they enabled a combination of written and verbal, as well as individual and group, responses to be gathered.



The discussion guides and worksheets used in the research are included in the appendix to this report. These documents show how each focus group and interview was run in detail. The overall advantages of the approach used were that:

- The research emulated a real-life referendum setting. Respondents were asked to answer the question before any discussion took place. They then had to undertake an individual written task asking them to: state in their own words what they thought the question was about; identify words and phrases that were easy or difficult to understand; suggest changes to the question.

- It harnessed the benefits of individual and group responses. The research design drew on the benefits of both individual and group responses by employing a focus group setting incorporating written tasks, combined with depth interviews. While a wholly individual approach to this research would have enabled researchers to focus on the understanding of one respondent in detail, without the risk of their views being affected by group members, the approach we used enabled this while also providing for collective discussion. The advantage of the group discussions was that misunderstandings could be drawn out more clearly and improvements better identified and more creatively developed.
- Researchers were able to identify both the literal and contextual barriers to meaning by examining the question from different perspectives. They were also able to understand how the question could be revised and improved to mitigate these barriers to meaning.

A proportion of the interviews and focus groups were carried out in the Welsh language. Where these took place, researchers focused on testing understanding of the question in Welsh. However, where respondents were inclined to refer to both versions of the question (Welsh and English), researchers investigated their views of each. Similarly, where Welsh language speakers were recruited to the English language focus groups and depth interviews, the Welsh language question was also tested.

2.4.2 Sample

A total of 96 people participated in the research. Of these, 20 were interviewed individually and 76 participated in focus groups. The tables in this section show where focus groups and depth interviews took place and the kinds of voters that participated in each of them.

A) Focus Groups

Eight focus groups were carried out. Each focus group lasted 1½ hours and 10 participants were recruited to each.

Voting Behaviour	TOTAL	Location		
		East	West	North
NAW Voters (25-65+)	3	1*	1	1*
Non-NAW Voters (25-65+)	3	1	1*	1
Younger People (17-24)	2	1	-	1*
TOTAL	8	3	2	3

* Group carried out in Welsh language



Location

Focus groups were carried out in the following locations:

- East Wales – Bridgend, Cardiff
- West Wales – Aberystwyth
- North Wales – Conwy

Voting Behaviour

The sample was segmented according to previous voting behaviour in NAW elections, using three segments:

- NAW Voters – those who had voted in NAW elections in the past
- Non-NAW Voters – those who had not voted in NAW elections in the past
- Younger people – those aged 17-24, to include a minimum of two who had previously voted in Assembly elections

Furthermore, in each group a minimum quota of two participants who were against devolution was set, to ensure that it was possible to gauge responses from people who were likely to vote both 'Yes' and 'No'.

Language

Four focus groups were carried out in Welsh and specifically addressed the Welsh language version of the referendum question. These are shown in the table above and include:

- NAW Voters in East Wales
- NAW Voter in North Wales
- Non-NAW Voters in West Wales
- Younger People in North Wales

Age, Gender & Socio-Economic Group

Two groups with younger people aged 17-24 were carried out. Within the NAW Voters and Non-NAW Voters groups, at least two respondents from each of the following age groups were represented: 25-31, 32-44, 45-64, 65+.

An even number of men and women were recruited to the focus group. Each group contained a mix of socio-economic groups, with at least two respondents from each of the following: AB, C1, C2, DE.

B) Depth Interviews

20 individual depth interviews were carried out. Each lasted one hour.

Respondent Type	TOTAL	Location		
		East	West	North
NAW Voters (25-65+)	3	1	1*	1
Non-NAW Voters (25-65+)	3	1	1	1*
Younger People (17-24)	2	1*	-	1
People with disabilities	4	1	1	2
People with a low level of literacy	4	1	2	1
People who do not speak English or Welsh as a first language	4	2	1	1
TOTAL	20	7	6	7

* Interview carried out in Welsh language

Recruitment criteria:

- In each region specific locations were the same as for the focus groups
- Three interviews were carried out in Welsh, one in each region (these are identified in the table above)
- Disabilities included only those that affected respondents' perceptions and understanding of the question – visual impairments, learning disabilities and cognitive impairments
- A range of ages were recruited across each respondent type and the following age groups were represented: 17-24, 25-31, 32-44, 45-64, 65+
- Equal numbers of men and women were recruited and people from a range of socio-economic groups (AB, C1, C2, DE) were represented
- A minimum quota of four participants who were against devolution was set

2.5 Strengths & Limitations of the Research

This research employed a qualitative approach. The main strength of this approach was that it allowed respondents to give their views on the referendum question in an open and spontaneous way. While the discussions followed a clear structure, respondents were not required to limit themselves to multiple choice answers and responses during the focus groups and interviews were full, rich and nuanced. In addition, by using a combination of depth



interviews and focus groups, the research benefited from both individual responses and collective discussion, which enabled researchers both to simulate voting conditions and generate suggestions for change.

However, there are limitations to the approach used. Qualitative research emphasises self-expression and insight over numerical outcomes and therefore relies on detailed discussion with a relatively small sample. On this study, focus groups and depth interviews were carried out with a sample of 96 respondents. This sample cannot be considered representative of the Welsh electorate generally and any numerical outcomes provided should not be taken as proportional of the population overall. The findings reported in this document focus on how easy voters found it to understand the current draft of the referendum question and provide suggestions for improving its clarity. They do not attempt to say what proportion of the Welsh population found different aspects of the question difficult to understand or what proportion would benefit from the changes suggested.

2.6 Research Team

This study was led by Michael Thompson (Director, GfK NOP Social Research). English language fieldwork was carried out by the following members of the GfK NOP Social Research team:

- **North Wales** – Josephine Hansom (Research Manager, GfK NOP Social Research)
- **East Wales** – Amrita Sood (Director, GfK NOP Social Research)
- **West Wales** – Michael Thompson (Director, GfK NOP Social Research)

All Welsh language fieldwork was carried out by the following team from Arad Consulting:

- **North Wales** – Hefin Thomas (Senior Consultant, Arad Consulting)
- **East / West Wales** – Sioned Lewis (Senior Consultant, Arad Consulting)

This report presents findings from the research carried out by GfK NOP; the views expressed are not those of the Electoral Commission.



3 Background Awareness & Understanding

3.1 Devolution, the NAW and the Forthcoming Referendum

Respondents' understanding of the concept of devolution in Wales was limited. Many were unaware of the word 'devolution' and use of the term 'devolved areas' proved one of the main areas of misunderstanding in responses to the referendum question.

"Is devolved the opposite of involved?"

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Conwy)

"I imagine evolved, and this [devolved] is the opposite; areas that are slipping that need to go back up."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Cardiff)

"The devolved areas, we're talking about Wales aren't we?"

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

Amongst those who were more familiar with the term and understood what devolution was, a small minority either did not know whether Wales had devolved powers or believed that it did not have these powers. Indeed, one respondent believed that Wales had voted against devolution in the 1997 referendum.

"We had a referendum on devolution before and voted against it. Now they want another one."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

Almost all respondents had heard of the NAW⁴ and knew that Assembly Members were voted for by the Welsh people. However, most had a limited understanding of the powers of the NAW. Firstly, with the exception of a few high profile initiatives (free prescriptions, reduced tuition fees, free swimming), the majority were not sure which areas of Welsh life the NAW had legislative power over. Secondly, most were not aware of the legislative mechanics of the NAW and did not know that the Assembly could gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the UK Parliament.

⁴ One respondent (Bridgend) had not heard of the NAW. This respondent did not speak English or Welsh as a first language, did not vote and had limited engagement with Welsh or UK politics.

"One example I can think of is the fact that people in Wales don't pay for prescriptions which is obviously due to the Assembly and I'm pretty sure that parking fees in hospitals are going out at some point which is down again to the Assembly. But I couldn't give many clear cut examples."

(NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Conwy)

"As far as health and things were concerned I thought they [National Assembly] already had that [full law making powers]. They were given their budget and it was up to them what they did with it. I didn't realise they had to have parliamentary approval for things, it surprised me; it's disappointed me in a way."

(Non-NAW Voter, Low Literacy, Aberystwyth)

Young people aged 17-24 showed least awareness of all the respondent groups. They tended to have a limited knowledge of the concept of devolution and often showed scant understanding of the powers of the NAW and its legislative processes.

"I don't know much about this so I'm getting my information from this (the voting paper) more than anything."

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

By contrast, previous NAW voters were most aware and many of them had a good understanding of the concept of devolution. Across the sample, there was little difference in awareness on these issues between English and Welsh speakers.

"At the moment there are areas of politics which the National Assembly can make or change laws to but not all aspects of these areas."

(NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Cardiff)

"I think they've got their toe in the water in terms of decision making, but what they're after is just more powers in the areas that they are dealing with [currently]."

(NAW Voter, Visual Impairment, Cardiff)

A minority were aware that a referendum on the powers of the Assembly was due to take place in 2011. These respondents tended to be older (35+) and had previously voted in NAW elections. They followed Welsh political issues in the news and had usually heard about the referendum via television news reports or through a local or national newspaper. Welsh language speakers had slightly higher levels of awareness of the referendum than non-Welsh speakers.

"It's in the newspapers so much isn't it? And we will hear nothing but this [the referendum] for the next nine months."

(NAW Voter, English Language Group, Conwy)



In addition, a few recognised that there had been debate about the date on which the referendum was to take place between the Assembly and the Secretary of State for Wales.

"I had heard that the Secretary of State in London...I'd heard that there have been disagreements with Carwyn Jones, well, with the Assembly and Peter Hain...The debate has been on the news."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

Given that the referendum question was shown at the start of the focus groups and depth interviews, it is difficult to say how much respondents knew about the way in which the referendum might affect the powers of the NAW prior to attending. However, given the responses to the question discussed throughout this report, it is safe to say that only a few were spontaneously aware that (with a Yes outcome) the referendum would enable the Assembly to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas independently, without the agreement of the UK Parliament.

These findings echo those from qualitative and quantitative research conducted in 2008 and 2009 on behalf of the All Wales Convention (AWC)⁵. The AWC research found that there was confusion around the Assembly's remit and powers. Half of survey respondents answered incorrectly when asked whether the Assembly could raise the basic rate of income tax, and around a quarter answered incorrectly when asked whether the Assembly is currently able to make laws.

3.2 Impact of Knowledge on Responses to the Referendum Question

The discussion above indicates that most respondents were coming to this research without much background knowledge of the issues concerned. They had limited awareness of the concept of devolution and the powers of the NAW, little awareness of the forthcoming referendum and very restricted knowledge of its political significance.

One of the consequences of this was that many respondents compensated for their lack of knowledge by making their own assumptions about what the referendum question was asking. For instance, some assumed that the question was about independence for Wales or an increase in the tax raising powers of the Assembly and answered it in this way, even after they had actually read the question. Others who shared these assumptions could see that the question was about something else but still chose to vote as if it was about independence or tax raising powers, as they believed that a Yes vote would amount to a step in this direction.

⁵ *Research to support the work of the All Wales Convention (2009)*, GfK NOP. Available at: www.allwalesconvention.org

"It says here 'gain further powers', further powers. They want more powers on top of education, social services and stuff - that's how I read it anyway."

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Interview, Conwy)

I thought that we'd be independent to vote for ourselves. But now...there's a degree of uncertainty about it; that we're not independent. 'Without needing the agreement' is just the same as saying 'independent' but it [the question] is not saying that we're going to be independent."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

"I feel the question is asking whether Wales as a nation should have a greater say in the way Wales as a nation is governed and greater devolution would lead to an autonomous state."

(NAW Voter, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

While some were more responsive to the wording of the question than this, it is clear that where voters have limited knowledge of devolution and the powers of the Assembly, their interpretation of the referendum question is strongly influenced by their (in some instances erroneous) assumptions. It may be that this situation will be mitigated by the publicity, information and campaigning to which the Welsh public will be exposed prior to the referendum by March 2011. However, given that many respondents to this research were unaware of the concept of devolution and the powers of the NAW after twelve years of devolved government in Wales, this should not be relied on.

3.3 Implications of Voters' Knowledge for the Referendum Question

Voters' current knowledge of the issues surrounding the referendum gave rise to some important considerations for the wording of the question. These are as follows:

- **It is extremely important that the question does not confuse voters.** As indicated above, many respondents could not say what the powers of the NAW were or how this referendum would affect them. Given this, a question which articulates the choice voters have in a straightforward manner and minimises any confusion in their mind is essential.

"Devolved areas here are Health, Education, Social Services. But it's saying here 'pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas'. So have they [Assembly] got a say over some of these areas though? To me, that suggests that there probably are still areas where the Welsh Assembly haven't got full control. Parliament still has... That would make me feel that they haven't all the control that I believe them to have here."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

- **The question wording must be easily comprehensible.** Many respondents were easily confused and distracted by words they could not understand such as 'devolution' and 'devolved areas'. Keeping the language of the question simple and avoiding, minimising or explaining any difficult words and phrases would help to avoid this.

"If that paragraph was all there was on the paper, I wouldn't know what the devolved areas were and I don't think the general Joe Bloggs person would either."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Conwy)

- **Some explanation of the current legislative arrangements is required.** Because respondents often did not know about the powers of the NAW or the legislative relationship between the NAW and the UK Parliament, this should be made clear in the referendum question. Voters who are not familiar with the present arrangements will struggle to fully understand a question that does not explain them.

"Because I didn't understand what powers Wales had anyway I just ticked no because I don't know what would happen if they changed."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Cardiff)

- **A clear explanation of Yes and No outcomes is needed.** A simple and coherent explanation of Yes and No outcomes is required to help voters understand the impact of their answer. This should help to overcome confusion concerning the subject of the referendum (e.g. the belief of some respondents that it is about independence or tax raising powers).

"I think because I understood the 'yes' bit more, as opposed to the 'no' bit, I thought 'that sounds good, I'll tick that'."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Cardiff)

- **Emphasise what the referendum is not about.** Some respondents had a firmly entrenched belief that the referendum question was about independence for Wales or giving the Assembly tax raising powers. In order to tackle this, it may be worth explicitly stating that this is not that case and that the referendum is about extending the NAW's powers within the devolved areas.

"It's about independence for Wales, which I don't think is right."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

The following sections of this report will concentrate on responses to the question wording and will identify elements of the referendum question which proved problematic for respondents, offering recommendations for how these can be changed and improved. The report will build on the discussion above to show how respondents' awareness of devolution and the powers of the Assembly affected their understanding of the question and the responses they gave.

4 Interpretation of the Question Wording

4.1 Overall Understanding

Once they had read the referendum question, the vast majority understood that it was asking them to decide whether or not the law-making powers of the NAW should be increased in some way or other. During the introductory task, respondents were asked to paraphrase the question in their own words. Responses suggesting the question was asking people to vote on a general increase in the NAW's powers were common, as shown below.

"My understanding of the questions is - Do I want to see more power given to the Welsh Assembly?"

(Non-NAW Voter, Disabled, Bridgend)

"Asking us as Welsh people whether we think our Assembly should be able to make decisions regarding core aspects of our daily lives, and for us to vote for our decision on whether the National Assembly should have this power."

(NAW Voters, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

"What our feelings are about the power of the Parliament."

(Younger People, English Language Group, Cardiff)

However, respondents had much more difficulty identifying exactly what kind of an increase in law-making powers the question was referring to. When asked to be specific about this, it was clear that most respondents had not interpreted the referendum question accurately.⁶ A range of interpretations were provided throughout the interviews and focus groups and these are described below:

- **Independence**

- > Some respondents believed the question was asking whether or not they were in favour of independence for Wales. Two respondents paraphrased the question in the following way on their worksheets:
 - *"Should Wales aim to achieve greater independence?" (NAW Voters, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)*
 - *"I think the question is asking whether Wales should be seen as independent to the rest of Britain..." (Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Bridgend)*

⁶ It should be noted that most respondents who initially interpreted the question incorrectly had no doubt that their interpretation was correct at the time they gave it. It was only when they were able to discuss their interpretation with other respondents (or researchers), and were alerted to any errors, that they were able to recognise these. This demonstrates the strength of an iterative, qualitative approach to question testing, in which initial responses are given, explained, discussed and, where necessary, challenged.

- **Tax raising powers**
 - > Others believed the question was asking whether or not the NAW should have tax raising powers, similar to those of the Scottish Parliament. One respondent said that, *"I should think they will be able to raise our taxes."* (Non-NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth) if a yes vote was given.
- **New devolved areas**
 - > A few felt the question was asking them whether the current devolved areas should be extended, so that the NAW had control over a greater range of policy areas. To articulate this, one respondent commented on her worksheet, *"Welsh government want to be by themselves – separate from England. Make laws by themselves. Decide by themselves."* (Non-NAW Voters, English / Welsh not first language, Cardiff)
- **Removal of Parliamentary approval**
 - > These respondents came closest to an accurate understanding of the question. They recognised that, at present, the NAW needed Parliamentary approval to make certain laws and that the question was asking whether the need for approval should be removed.⁷
 - *"Whether we want the Assembly to have the ability to pass laws on all devolved areas, without asking for Westminster approval."* (Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Bridgend)
 - *"That the Welsh Assembly is given more power to decide issues in Wales without the agreement of Parliament."* (Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Conwy)
 - > While not all of these respondents fully understood the complexities of the NAW's law-making powers (e.g. that it could make laws without Parliamentary approval in some aspects of the devolved areas already), they had a reasonably good understanding of the question's meaning.
- **Deprived / developing areas**
 - > Finally, some respondents were confused by the words 'devolved areas'. Not recognising this unfamiliar phrase, they assumed it meant 'deprived areas' or 'developing areas'. They therefore believed the referendum was a vote on whether the NAW should have more power to make laws affecting deprived or developing areas of Wales.

⁷ Those who came closest to a full understanding of the question tended to be older (35+) NAW Voters. There was no significant difference in the proportion of English and Welsh language speakers within this category. Those who were aware of the forthcoming referendum tended to have a good understanding of the question as they were more likely to be following Welsh political issues in the news.

- > *"The question is about if you agree or disagree the Wales Assembly should be given more power to make laws to its own developing areas." (NAW Voter, English / Welsh not first language, Aberystwyth)*

While most had a better understanding of what a No outcome would entail (a retention of the current legislative arrangements), a few were also confused about this and wondered whether a No outcome would result in the withdrawal of devolved powers for Wales and a return to the pre-1997 arrangement.

Some respondents could not distinguish between the present arrangements and the possible future arrangements (should a Yes vote be given) articulated in the question. For example, a few were not aware that the NAW had to get approval to make certain laws in devolved areas from Parliament and, consequently, could not see what additional powers a Yes vote was offering.

The question's clarity was further challenged by the few individuals who had a good understanding of the subject of the referendum prior to attending the research (i.e. who thought it was about removing Parliamentary approval in devolved areas) but came to doubt this understanding after reading the question. Clearly, the question was not supporting or reinforcing the knowledge these individuals had built up from following referendum reports in the news. This seriously called into question the suitability of the question in its current form.

This finding provided clear evidence that poor awareness of devolution and the powers of the NAW was not the only reason for people misinterpreting the referendum question and showed that the question wording and structure also contributed to it being misunderstood. The impact on understanding of individual words and phrases, the question structure and the question layout are discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Words & Phrases

The referendum question below is marked to show particular words and phrases respondents found difficult to understand. Many of the phrases identified are the same across the Welsh and English versions, although more phrases are identified on the Welsh version. This is principally because more words were unfamiliar to readers of the Welsh language question.

Refferendwm ar bwerau deddfu Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	Referendum on law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales
<p>Ar hyn o bryd, mae gan y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol (y Cynulliad) y pwerau i ddeddfu ar gyfer Cymru ar rai pynciau mewn <u>meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli</u>. Mae'r <u>meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli yn cynnwys iechyd, addysg, <u>qwasanaethau cymdeithasol</u>, llywodraeth leol a'r amgylchedd. Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau i <u>deddfu mewn meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli trwy gael cytundeb gan Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig, a hynny <u>fesul pwnc</u></u>.</u></p> <p>Os bydd y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn pleidleisio 'Ydw' yn y refferendwm hwn, bydd y Cynulliad yn ennill pwerau i <u>deddfu ar bob pwnc yn y <u>meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli</u></u>. Os bydd y rhan fwyaf yn pleidleisio 'Nac Ydw', bydd y trefniadau presennol - sef trosglwyddo'r hawl i ddeddfu <u>bob yn ddaid, gyda chytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig bob tro - yn parhau</u>.</p> <p>Ydych chi'n cytuno y dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau yn awr i <u>deddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y <u>meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli</u></u> heb fod angen cytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig yn gyntaf?</p>	<p>At present, the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) has powers to make laws for Wales on some subjects within <u>devolved areas</u>. <u>Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment</u>. The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in <u>devolved areas</u> with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a <u>subject by subject basis</u>.</p> <p>If most people vote Yes in this referendum, the Assembly will gain powers to pass laws on all subjects in the <u>devolved areas</u>. <u>If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue</u>.</p> <p>Do you agree that the Assembly should now have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the <u>devolved areas</u> without needing the agreement of Parliament first?</p>
RHOWCH X MEWN UN BLWCH YN UNIG	PUT AN X IN ONE BOX ONLY
Ydw, rydw i'n cytuno - Yes, I agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nac ydw, dydw i ddim yn cytuno - No, I do not agree	<input type="checkbox"/>

A) English Language Question

'Devolved areas'

For the English language question, the phrase that was most commonly misunderstood and which proved most problematic to understanding of the question overall was 'devolved areas'. As discussed in Section 3, many respondents did not understand the concept of devolution very well and did not have a clear idea of what 'devolved areas' meant.

"Does it mean the areas that they're looking into? Is that what it means? I don't know."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

Many interpreted this phrase as referring to geographical areas within Wales that were either deprived or developing. This led some to understand the overall question as asking about whether the NAW should have more powers over these geographical areas. Others did not go this far and although they interpreted the phrase in this way, could see that the question was actually asking about the powers of the Assembly over Wales as a whole.

"Are they going to target just the devolved and deprived areas?"

(Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Bridgend)

One of the reasons why 'devolved areas' was so problematic was that it is repeated five times, across all three paragraphs. Thus, understanding the question without knowing what this phrase meant was difficult. Some admitted that they had simply ignored the phrase and tried to surmise the meaning of the question without reference to it.

"This word devolved repeats itself in the first one and the second one...this is going like a round robin."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

It may seem odd that respondents did not get to grips with this phrase, given that a description of it is offered in the second sentence of paragraph one.⁸ The fact that people missed the meaning of 'devolved areas' despite this explanation demonstrates how little understanding many had of the concept of devolution.

"It's already starting to get confusing, if they just said 'the National Assembly has powers to make laws in areas such as health and social services, education and we're looking to do it without parliamentary approval more.'"

(NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

⁸ Paragraph one, sentence two: 'Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment.'

However, it should also be noted that this sentence did clarify the meaning of 'devolved areas' for some respondents and that a clear explanation of this phrase, giving examples of key devolved areas such as health and education, is necessary for clear understanding.

"Devolved areas. I wasn't sure what that was, but then it says straight away, 'education, social issues'... I've never heard it before, but it [question] goes on to explain it to you, so it's quite straightforward."

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Interview, Bridgend)

'If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.'

This sentence (paragraph two, sentence two) was seen as overlong and over complicated. Many got lost when reading it, due to the number of clauses it contained (five in total) and did not fully grasp its meaning as a result.

Respondents did not like the way the sentence seemed to switch between formal and informal tones. *'...The present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power...'* was seen as highly formal language, while the subsequent phrase, *'bit by bit'*, was seen as very informal. Many felt that this juxtaposition made the sentence difficult to read.

"I found the middle part of the second paragraph a little bit difficult to get my head around and had to re-read it a few times."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Cardiff)

In addition, the sentence was seen as very repetitive of sentence three in paragraph one.⁹ Some did not think this repetition was necessary, while others found the repetition confusing due to the different wording of the two sentences (e.g. *'subject by subject'*, *'bit by bit'*). This led them to doubt whether the two sentences were describing the same process or not.

Whereas paragraph two, sentence two (describing the No outcome) was seen as difficult to understand, paragraph two, sentence one (describing the Yes outcome)¹⁰ was seen as clear and straightforward. This gave some the impression that the question was leading and that the description of the Yes outcome had been made clearer to encourage people to vote this way. A full discussion of the neutrality of the question is provided in Section 5.

⁹ Paragraph one, sentence three: *'The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis.'*

¹⁰ Paragraph two, sentence one: *'If most people vote Yes in this referendum, the Assembly will gain powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas.'*



"The 'yes' was clear, and the 'no' was not so clear to read. That's where you could interpret some bias."

(Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Bridgend)

"It's weighted too much towards a 'yes'...[There is] negativity in the second statement."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

'Subject by subject / bit by bit'

As described above, some found the use of *'subject by subject'* (paragraph one, sentence three) and *'bit by bit'* (paragraph two, sentence two) to describe the same process confusing. The slightly different wording led them to doubt whether the two sentences were describing the same process or not.

B) Welsh Language Question

'Meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli' ('Devolved areas')

As with the English language question, the phrase, *'Meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli'* proved one of the most problematic. *'Datganoli'* was an unfamiliar word to many, especially among the younger respondents, and indeed in the focus group of younger Welsh speakers only one believed that they had come across the word before. It should be noted however, that the English word 'devolved' was as equally unfamiliar to them as it was to other respondents.

"If there was an extra section of information available to someone as an option - that would be good. In case someone asks "What are these devolved areas? For it to be [explained] there in front of you - this is what they are."

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Interview, Conwy)

Respondents did feel they were able to work out the meaning of the question based on the contextual information provided. However, it was apparent that they often incorrectly guessed at the meaning of the word. For example, one group misquoted the question several times, using the phrase, *"meysydd sydd wedi'u datblygu"* (*developed area*).

The *'meysydd'* part of the phrase was also problematic. Whereas in English the word was seen as referring to geographical areas, the Welsh language version did not cause this problem; rather the problem was one of unfamiliarity. As one respondent commented:

"I had no idea what meysydd was/ Odd gynnai'm syniad beth oedd meysydd"

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Aberystwyth)

This misunderstanding, coupled with difficulties experienced with the word 'devolution' meant that respondents had to re-read the Welsh version and compare it to the English version to work out the meaning of the question.

"I find the Welsh language version easier but I just check the English just to reassure myself"

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

'Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau' ('The Assembly can gain further powers')

The meaning of this sentence was not clear to the respondents (paragraph one, sentence three). This led some respondents to initially read the sentence as 'the Assembly will gain powers', therefore confusing the present and future powers of the NAW. The word 'caiff' was the problem here as it was unfamiliar to many. Even referring to the English version here didn't settle the meaning of this phrase for all respondents, as some found the phrase, 'The Assembly can gain powers' to be similarly ambiguous and could not tell whether it was referring to current or proposed arrangements.

"Caiff – I wasn't sure whether it was referring to the present or to the situation as it is now, or to what can happen in the future... I think that to emphasise that it's referring to now, they need to repeat the 'at present' to strengthen the point."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

'a hynny fesul pwnc' / ('on a subject by subject basis')

Several respondents underlined 'fesul' on their worksheets and raised it for discussion as it was unfamiliar to them. Some of the respondents were unsure whether the phrase, 'fesul pwnc' (subject by subject) referred to entire areas of devolved power or smaller sub categories within these areas.

'Fesul pwnc', you know? It's right at the end and good God, what [does it mean]?!'

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Aberystwyth)

'bob yn damaid' (bit by bit)

The tone of this phrase was not seen as being so informal as the English version and the main reason given by respondents for identifying this phrase as potentially confusing was simply that it was not common parlance. Focus group respondents in all areas of Wales commented that "we don't say 'bob yn damaid' round here," and, "there must be a better way to say that in Welsh". A small number struggled to understand the meaning of 'bob yn damaid' altogether and referred to the English version.

"I don't know what we'd say for 'bob yn damaid' (bit by bit). We don't say 'bob yn damaid' around here"

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

Other unfamiliar words

Other Welsh language words posed a problem for some respondents but were a less common barrier to understanding than those identified above. The verb *'i ddeddfu'* ('to make laws') and the phrase *'gwasanaethau cymdeithasol'* (social services) were the most commonly mentioned as examples where respondents had been forced to refer to the English version to understand their meaning. The reason given for these difficulties was that these words were not common parlance in Welsh and were used far more often in English (e.g. in the print media or on television).

'Because when we read something about social services we read it in English I think, very rarely in Welsh. So if you don't read and listen to Welsh language news regularly then you're not going to hear these words'.

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Aberystwyth)

'Lots of the Caernarfon people, they don't use words like gwasanaethau [services] and cymdeithasol [social] and llywodraeth [government] and things like that. This is pure Welsh isn't it? This isn't the way it's spoken'.
(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

The frequent referencing of the English version of the question by Welsh language speakers led them to read the question at a noticeably slower pace and contributed to their perception that the question was rather long and over-complicated.

4.3 Question Structure

The question structure was not seen to pose as much of a barrier to clear understanding as particular words and phrases. Many respondents believed the broad structure of the question should be retained and agreed that the following aspects were required:

- A short and clear title
- An account of the current legislative arrangements
- An indication of how legislative arrangements would be affected if a Yes / No vote was given
- A short and clear question

Overall, respondents did not believe that a preamble (including an account of the current legislative arrangements and an indication of how legislative arrangements would be affected if a Yes / No vote was given) could be dispensed with. While some of those who were better

informed about the subject of the referendum did express this view, most felt that a preamble was needed for them to understand the question and respond to it in line with their intentions.

"I think the (first) paragraph is really important to some people, especially if you're sitting on the fence."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

It was therefore clear that most respondents believed the basic aspects of the current question structure should be retained. This is not to say that structural problems with the question were not identified, however, and the following difficulties were reported:

- Overall question length
- Sentence length and complexity
- Distinction between present and future scenarios

Across the sample, respondents believed the overall question was too long. When reading it, many found that they lost the gist of the question and had to read individual sections a number of times before they were able to piece together its meaning. In particular, some complained that the question was repetitive and wondered whether repeated sections could be dispensed with.

"I thought it was a very long question to have when you're approaching as if this was what I would be given in a polling booth. I had to read several pieces about two or three times."

(Non-NAW Voter, Low Literacy, Aberystwyth)

For the English language question, this criticism was most commonly aimed at the sentence, *'The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis'* (paragraph one) and the phrase *'...the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time...'* (paragraph two), which appeared to be saying the same thing.

The overall question length came in for even greater criticism from readers of the Welsh language question. The Welsh language version was seen as longer and more repetitive than the English version and there was a feeling that this might dissuade voters from reading it in full. Welsh language respondents believed that most of the sentences were too long and should be replaced with shorter, punchier sentences where possible. Paragraph one, sentence two was given as one example of an overly long and complicated sentence, which repeated word for word the ending of the previous sentence.¹¹

¹¹ Paragraph one, sentence two: *'Mae'r meysydd sydd wed'u datganoli yn cynnwys ieachyd, addysg...'*

With regard to sentence length and complexity, the second sentence in the second paragraph of the English language question received most criticism.¹² This sentence has already been discussed in detail above; however, from a structural point of view, the number of clauses and the amount of recursion in this sentence made it quite difficult for many people to understand.

The Welsh language question received similar criticisms and the length and complexity of the second sentence in the second paragraph was again singled out for criticism. In this context, some respondents commented that the question overall had the feel and tone of translated text and that it didn't read as naturally as it might have done.

Finally, when reading the preamble, some found it difficult to distinguish the present legislative arrangements from possible future arrangements following the outcome of the referendum. While most understood that the first two sentences of paragraph one were describing present arrangements, some believed the third sentence was describing a possible future arrangement, perhaps due to the use of the words, 'can gain'.¹³

"The first paragraph starts by talking about the 'present', but then says 'can gain' and it's not clear if this is now or as a result of the referendum. The second paragraph [is] confusing, as they [Assembly] don't 'gain powers'; they can already pass laws, just not autonomously...?"

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

Similarly, by placing information about Yes and No outcomes together in paragraph two, the question was seen to run together a future scenario (the Yes outcome) with a description of the current arrangements (the No outcome).

As a solution to this, it was suggested that the question could be restructured to provide a description of the current arrangements in the first paragraph, followed by a corresponding account of the No outcome in the second paragraph and a description of the arrangements a Yes outcome would introduce in a third paragraph. This was seen as a way of separating a description of the current arrangements from a description of the possible changes a Yes vote would bring about.

4.4 Question Layout

All respondents thought the question layout was clear and easy to follow and none reported any problems with it. None were confused or put-off by the presence of the Welsh and English versions of the question being on the same page and any comments made about the

¹² Paragraph two, sentence two: 'If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.'

¹³ Paragraph one: 'At present, the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) has powers to make laws for Wales on some subjects within devolved areas. Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment. The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis.'



dual language format were positive. All found the division of the question into a title, preamble, question and answer boxes to be appropriate and easy to follow.

Four interviews were carried out amongst people with disabilities and two of these were with people with visual impairments. Of these, one respondent had a moderate visual impairment and was able to read the question in its current format. Nonetheless he did state that he would have preferred to use a large print version. The other visually impaired respondent was profoundly blind. She was not able to read standard text at all and the researcher had to read the question to her during the interview. An audio version of the question would be required in order for this respondent to vote in the referendum.

"If it was available in large print then I'd obviously feel more confident going to a polling station and filling it all in."

(NAW Voter, Visual Impairment, Cardiff)

With regard to provision of the question in different formats, it was clear that the three respondents who did not speak English or Welsh as a first language would have preferred for the question to be presented in their first language. While all three could understand the question in English as well as most first language English speakers in the sample, they struggled with words such as 'devolved areas'.

Only one suggested amendment to the layout was made, by a few respondents in the Welsh language focus groups and interviews. They suggested that the answer boxes were placed in the centre of the panel at the bottom of the page, with the Welsh prompt (e.g. Ydw, rydw i'n cynto) on the left side and the English prompt (e.g. Yes, I agree) on the right side of the box. This would position the answer boxes beneath both the Welsh and English versions, which might be more appropriate for those answering in Welsh (at present both boxes are positioned on the right side of the page under the English question).

5 Neutrality of the Question

On first reading, very few respondents commented that the question was leading them to give a particular answer. However, when prompted to think about the neutrality of the question, respondents identified a number of areas as being potentially leading. These are highlighted in red below. All of these areas were seen to be leading voters to a Yes response, though it should be noted that those who identified these areas were predominantly No voters.

Refferendwm ar bwerau deddfu Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	Referendum on law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales
<p>Ar hyn o bryd, mae gan y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol (y Cynulliad) y pwerau i ddeddfu ar gyfer Cymru ar rai pynciau mewn meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli. Mae'r meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli yn cynnwys iechyd, addysg, gwasanaethau cymdeithasol, llywodraeth leol a'r amgylchedd. Caiff y Cynulliad ennill mwy o bwerau i ddeddfu mewn meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli trwy gael cytundeb gan Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig, a hynny fesul pwnc.</p>	<p>At present, the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) has powers to make laws for Wales on some subjects within devolved areas. Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment. The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis.</p>
<p><u>Os bydd y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn pleidleisio "Ydw" yn y refferendwm hwn, bydd y Cynulliad yn ennill pwerau i ddeddfu ar bob pwnc yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli. Os bydd y rhan fwyaf yn pleidleisio 'Nac Ydw', bydd y trefniadau presennol - sef trosglwyddo'r hawl i ddeddfu bob yn ddamaid, gyda chytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig bob tro - yn parhau.</u></p>	<p><u>If most people vote Yes in this referendum, the Assembly will gain powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas. If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.</u></p>
<p><u>Ydych chi'n cytuno y dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau yn awr i ddeddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli heb fod angen cytundeb Senedd y Deyrnas Unedig yn gyntaf?</u></p>	<p><u>Do you agree that the Assembly should now have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas without needing the agreement of Parliament first?</u></p>
<p>RHOWCH X MEWN UN BLWCH YN UNIG</p>	<p>PUT AN X IN ONE BOX ONLY</p>
<p>Ydw, rydw i'n cytuno - Yes, I agree</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Nac ydw, dydw i ddim yn cytuno - No, I do not agree</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the English language question, the area which was most frequently seen as leading was paragraph two. Some respondents felt this paragraph was leading people to vote Yes in the following ways:

- Description of the Yes outcome came first, placing greater emphasis on a Yes result than a No result
- Description of the No outcome was somewhat hidden in the paragraph (sentence two)
- The Yes outcome was described in a simple and straightforward way and was easy to understand, whereas the No outcome was described in a complicated way that was more difficult to understand
- Wording of the Yes description gave a sense of positive change ('...gain powers to make laws...' / '...ennill pwerau i ddeddfu...') whereas wording of the No description was more negative and gave a sense of stasis or slow, incremental change ('...bit by bit...' / '...bob yn damaid ... bob tro...')

"If most people vote 'yes' in this Referendum the Assembly will gain powers. If most people vote 'no', then the present arrangements [that] transfer the law making power bit by bit will continue. In other words you're getting less if you don't vote 'yes'."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

The phrase 'Do you agree...' / 'Ydych chi'n cytuno...' at the start of paragraph three (the question itself), was also seen as leading towards a Yes outcome. However, this was less contentious than paragraph two and was commented on by fewer respondents. These individuals believed that 'Do you agree...' / 'Ydych chi'n cytuno...' was prompting a Yes response by implying that the question was partial (i.e. that it was really asking 'Do you agree with me?' or 'Do you agree – you do, don't you?'). One potential improvement was suggested, changing the wording of paragraph three to, 'Should the Assembly have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas...?' / 'Dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau i ddeddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli...?'

"Do you agree' sounds a bit leading! It could be do you agree or disagree but then you can't ask the question."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Conwy)

Overall, it should be noted that views on whether or not the question was leading were fairly mild. Even No voters who believed the question was prompting people to vote Yes did not feel very strongly about this. In identifying the shortcomings of the question, it was clear that the impediments to understanding addressed in Section 4 were a much more significant problem than the potentially leading aspects discussed above.

6 Accuracy of Response

Despite the many misunderstandings respondents had and the many ways in which they misinterpreted the question, most were able to give the answer they wanted to. The main reason for this was that most understood that the question was asking them to decide whether or not the law-making powers of the NAW should be increased and had very clear views on this issue. Consequently, even though they may not have known exactly what kind of an increase in powers the question was asking about, most were able to vote in line with their intentions.

For instance, those who thought the question was about independence for Wales and were in favour of this voted Yes. Once their misunderstandings had been challenged and resolved, these voters still voted Yes as they wanted the NAW to have whatever additional powers were on offer.

"I was pretty confident in replying because I knew what the question was asking...I think basically it's asking me whether the Welsh Assembly Government should be given more independent powers or do I think they should stay as they are..."

(NAW Voter, Visual Impairment, Cardiff)

This is not a particularly reassuring outcome and indicates that, unless changes are made to the question, many voters may come away from polling stations in March next year believing they have voted on a different question from the one that was actually asked. Although they may have voted in line with their intentions (i.e. they would still have voted the way they did if they had properly understood the question), they will have an inaccurate perception of what the referendum was about and its possible outcomes.

Many respondents did admit that, although they were able to answer in line with their intentions, they were confused by the question and had doubts about what it was asking. In particular, those few individuals who had a good understanding of the subject of the referendum (i.e. who thought it was about removing Parliamentary approval in devolved areas) often came to doubt this understanding after reading the question. The referendum question was not supporting or reinforcing the knowledge these individuals' had built up prior to attending the research and was actually causing them to doubt this knowledge.

"I thought it was about the Assembly not having to go to Parliament to pass laws but I'm not so sure now."

(Non-NAW Voter, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

Across the sample as a whole, only a few respondents stated that they had not been able to answer the question in line with their intentions. These respondents had initially believed that the question was asking about a larger increase in the powers of the NAW than it actually was (either independence for Wales or tax raising powers). They did not want the NAW's powers to be increased to this extent and had therefore given a No answer. However, they said that



if they had understood that the question was only asking about the NAW's ability to pass laws in currently devolved areas without Parliament's approval, they would have voted Yes.

It is therefore evident that the question may mislead, or at least fail to resolve the erroneous assumptions, of some voters. In particular, those who are in favour of a limited increase in the powers of the NAW (in line with the referendum question) but who believe the referendum question is actually asking about a more substantial increase in powers than this are most at risk of giving an answer that is not in line with their intentions.

7 Fit with Question Assessment Guidelines

The objectives for this research required that any elements of the referendum question which proved problematic for users within the context of the Commission's question assessment guidelines were identified. This summary section will comment on the extent to which the question assessment guidelines were met, based on the findings of the research.

The question assessment guidelines state that, *'A referendum question should present the options clearly, simply and neutrally. So it should:*

- *Be easy to understand*
- *Be to the point*
- *Be unambiguous*
- *Avoid encouraging voters to consider one response more favourably than another*
- *Avoid misleading voters'*

Present the options clearly, simply and neutrally

The question does describe Yes and No options and most respondents agreed that a description of these should be retained. However, while the description of the Yes option was seen as clear and simple, the description of the No option was not.

The Yes option was described in a short sentence of two clauses and was reasonably well understood by most people, despite use of the words, *'devolved areas'* / *'meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli'* which, as discussed, were often misinterpreted throughout the question. The No option was described in a long sentence of five clauses which was widely seen as convoluted and difficult to understand. In particular, the description of the current legislative arrangements contained in this sentence (*'...which transfer that law-making power bit by bit'*) was seen as difficult to understand, not least because it used different language from the previous description of these arrangements in paragraph one, sentence three.

In addition, the presentation of the Yes and No options was not seen as neutral. The description of the Yes outcome came first and was therefore seen as placing greater emphasis on a Yes result than a No result by some. The description of the No outcome was felt to be somewhat hidden in the second paragraph. The Yes outcome was seen to be described in a simple and straightforward way and was easy to understand, whereas the No outcome was described in a complicated way that was more difficult to understand. Finally, wording of the Yes description gave a sense of positive change (*'...gain powers to make laws...' / '...ennill pwerau i ddeddfu...'*) whereas wording of the No description was more negative and gave a sense of stasis or slow, incremental change (*'...bit by bit...' / '...bob yn damaid...'*).

Should be easy to understand

As this report has shown, most respondents did not find the question easy to understand. Partly this was a result of their lack of awareness of the concept of devolution and the powers of the Assembly but the structure of the question also contributed. In particular, the following barriers to understanding were encountered:

- Overall question length
- Sentence length and complexity (especially paragraph two, sentence two)
- Lack of clear distinction between present and future scenarios
- Presence of difficult / unclear words (especially 'devolved areas')
- Presence of several unfamiliar words in the Welsh language question

Should be to the point

While a question structure involving a title, preamble (including a description of present legislative arrangements as well as Yes and No outcomes) and question is required, the current question was not seen as being particularly concise. Many respondents believed the overall question was too long and complained that particular elements were repetitive (paragraph one, sentence three and paragraph two, sentence two). In particular, paragraph two, sentence two was seen as overlong and confusing. The number of clauses and the amount of recursion in this sentence made it difficult for many to follow.

Should be unambiguous

Evidently, certain key words and phrases in the question were ambiguous. '*Devolved areas*' / '*meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli*' was criticised in this respect. Many respondents did not understand the concept of devolution well and did not have a clear idea what these words meant. This led to the phrase being interpreted as referring to 'deprived' or 'developing areas' in Wales, while some respondents admitted that they had simply ignored the phrase and tried to guess at the overall meaning of the question without reference to it.

The fact that a few individuals who had a good understanding of the subject of the referendum prior to attending the research (i.e. who thought it was about the removal of Parliamentary approval for laws made in existing devolved areas) came to doubt this understanding after reading the question, also suggests that the question is ambiguous.

Should avoid encouraging voters to consider one response more favourably than another

The question's neutrality was not as contentious as its clarity. Very few commented that they thought the question was leading before prompted on this by researchers. Nevertheless, when prompted, respondents found paragraph two and paragraph three to be potentially leading.

Paragraph two has already been discussed in this section. In the question (paragraph three), the phrase '*Do you agree...*' / '*Ydych chi'n cytuno...*' was also seen as leading towards a Yes



outcome. Some respondents believed that '*Do you agree...*' was prompting a Yes response by implying that the question was partial (i.e. that it was really asking '*Do you agree with me?*'). However, few had strong views on this and paragraph two was seen as more contentious than paragraph three.

Should avoid misleading voters

This research found that, paradoxically, most respondents were able to answer the question in line with their intentions despite the fact that they did not have an accurate perception of what the referendum question was actually asking. However, there were clear signs that some respondents had not been able to answer the question in line with their intentions. This was certainly the case amongst those who were in favour of a limited increase in the powers of the NAW (in line with the referendum question) but who believed the referendum question was asking about a more substantial increase in powers than this. While these respondents would have voted Yes if they had known the true meaning of the question, they voted No based on their misinterpretation.

8 Suggested Changes to Question Wording & Structure

8.1 Question Structure

A) Reduce question length (word count) where possible

Many aspects of the question structure were helpful to respondents' understanding. As mentioned in Section 4, there was a clear view that the following elements should be retained: a short and clear title, an account of the current legislative arrangements, an indication of how legislative arrangements would be affected if a Yes / No vote was given, a short and clear question.

"Not so long and more bullet pointed."

(Low literacy, Aberystwyth)

"Simplify English vocabulary using short sentences."

(English / Welsh not first language, Cardiff)

However, many did feel that the question (i.e. all three paragraphs) was too long and that the word count should be reduced. While doing this would help understanding and should be attempted, a reduction in question length should not be pursued at the expense of the necessary structural elements identified in the paragraph above.

B) Reduce repetition and where there is repetition, avoid inconsistencies in language used

One way a word count reduction could be achieved is by removing any unnecessary repetition. As identified in Section 4, many respondents believed that elements of paragraph one, sentence three (describing the current legislative arrangements) and paragraph two sentence two (describing the No outcome)¹⁴ unnecessarily repeated each other. This could be addressed by simplifying paragraph two, sentence two – as discussed in full under the 'Neutrality' heading below.

If the repetition of this text is retained, efforts should be made to ensure that the current inconsistencies in the language used are removed. For instance, the alternate use of '*subject by subject*' and '*bit by bit*' to describe the way in which Parliament can transfer law-making powers to the Assembly should be removed and the language used should be harmonised.

¹⁴ Paragraph one, sentence one: '*The Assembly can gain further powers to make laws in devolved areas with the agreement of the Parliament of the United Kingdom (Parliament) on a subject by subject basis.*' / Paragraph two, sentence two: '*If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.*'

C) Reduce sentence length and complexity where possible

The second sentence in the second paragraph of the English language question received most criticism as far as sentence length and complexity is concerned and should be amended.¹⁵ The number of clauses and the amount of recursion in this sentence made it quite difficult for many people to understand. Suggestions for simplifying this sentence are discussed in full under the 'Neutrality' heading below.

Welsh language respondents believed that most of the sentences were too long and should be replaced with shorter, punchier sentences where possible. Paragraph one, sentence two was given as one example of an overly long and complicated sentence, which repeated word for word the ending of the previous sentence¹⁶. One alternative wording could be to shorten the second sentence to read '*Mae'r meysydd hyn yn cynnwys*' ('These areas include...') or '*Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys...*' (*These include....*).

D) Clearly separate current legislative arrangements from possible future arrangements

When reading the preamble, some found it difficult to distinguish the present legislative arrangements from possible future arrangements (i.e. following the outcome of the referendum). As a solution to this, it was suggested that the question could be restructured to provide a description of the current arrangements in the first paragraph, followed by a corresponding account of the No outcome in the second paragraph and a description of the arrangements a Yes outcome would introduce in a third paragraph. Therefore, the question structure would be as stated on the following page.

¹⁵ Paragraph two, sentence two: '*If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.*'

¹⁶ Paragraph one, sentence two: '*Mae'r meysydd sydd wed'u datganoli yn cynnwys ieachyd, addysg...*'

- Title
- Paragraph one: explanation of current arrangements¹⁷
- Paragraph two: current arrangements will continue if a No vote is given
- Paragraph three: explanation of future arrangements if a Yes vote is given
- Paragraph four: question

E) Clearly separate explanation of Yes and No outcomes

By placing information about the Yes and No outcomes in subsequent sentences in paragraph two, the question ran together the Yes and No outcomes. This was seen as confusing by many and also led to accusations that the question was leading people to vote Yes by 'hiding' the description of the No outcome after the description of the Yes outcome. The suggestion made in the paragraph above (i.e. separating out the Yes and No descriptions into separate paragraphs) would help to resolve these difficulties.

F) Boldly state that the referendum question is not asking about independence for Wales or increased tax raising powers for the NAW

Given the level of misunderstanding here and the fact that many respondents believed the question was asking about independence or tax raising powers, it may well be worth including a statement making explicit the fact that the question is not asking about either of these things. A statement of this kind may also discourage those who arrive at the question with a strong assumption that the question is about independence or tax raising powers from persisting in this belief by challenging it in an open and direct way.

"To emphasise that the referendum is about areas already devolved? And not full government for Wales."

(Non-NAW Voters, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

8.2 Words & Phrases

8.2.1 English Language Question

A) Clearly explain meaning of 'devolved areas' or do not use this phrase

'Devolved areas' was the most commonly misunderstood phrase in the English language question and the one which proved most problematic to understanding of the question overall. An obvious solution to misunderstanding of this phrase would be to provide examples of

¹⁷ Please note that if the current paragraph ordering is retained, the phrase 'At present' / 'Ar hyn o bryd' should be repeated and inserted at the start of paragraph one, sentence three on the Welsh language version. This would clarify that sentence three is discussing the present legislative arrangements.

devolved areas so that voters can see what is meant by this phrase. However, this is already provided in the second sentence of paragraph one!¹⁸

Perhaps the list of examples of devolved areas provided (health, education, etc.) could be made more prominent by the use of bullet points. In addition, consideration should be given to listing all twenty devolved areas. This might serve two purposes: giving voters a full awareness of the devolved areas; showing what areas are not included in this list (e.g. tax raising powers). Finally, given the difficulties respondents experienced in understanding this phrase, consideration should also be given to rewording the question without using the words 'devolved areas'.

"Less repetitive. More simpler. Would like more of explanation of what devolved means. What are the other subjects in the devolved areas?"

(NAW Voters, English Language Group, Bridgend)

Qualitative research on behalf of the All Wales Convention has already identified a number of concepts that were very difficult for people to grasp, even with some explanation. The concept of devolved policy areas was obscure to most people, even when the description did not involve difficult terminology. However, when a list of policy areas (e.g. health, education, etc.) was provided to help explain the concept, this added clarity and allowed participants to apply the ideas to their everyday lives.

B) Simplify paragraph two, sentence two to enhance understanding

As already mentioned, the second sentence in the second paragraph of the English language question was difficult to understand and should be amended.¹⁹ Suggestions for simplifying this sentence are discussed in full under the 'Neutrality' heading below.

"The second paragraph could maybe have been made simplified, possibly elaborating on the arrangements which are currently in place on the transfer of powers."

(NAW Voters, English Language Group, Aberystwyth)

C) Harmonise formality of language throughout the question and avoid very informal language

Use of the phrase 'bit by bit' was widely disliked. Respondents found this language too informal and felt that it jarred with the formality of the rest of the question. The tone of the language used throughout the question should be harmonised to improve flow and

¹⁸ Paragraph one, sentence two: 'Devolved areas include health, education, social services, local government and environment.'

¹⁹ Paragraph two, sentence two: 'If most people vote No, then the present arrangements, which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time, will continue.'

comprehension. While the language used in the question needs to be easily understood, very informal language should be avoided where possible.

"The reference to bit by bit needs to be clarified i.e. what length of time etc."

(NAW Voter, English Language Interview, Aberystwyth)

8.2.2 Welsh Language Question

A) Clearly explain meaning of 'meysydd wedi'u datganoli', and consider alternatives for the word 'meysydd'

Many Welsh language readers had not come across the word 'datganoli' (here, 'devolved') and the word 'meysydd' ('areas') was also a new term for many. These respondents had to guess at the meaning of these words and were not always helped by referring to the English version. As with the English version, if devolved areas can be included in a bullet point list, this might aid understanding. Equally, consideration might also be given to rewording the question without using the word 'datganoli'.

"Possibly use another term instead of 'datganoli' - literal translation in my interpretation would be 'uncentred' - is there a clearer Welsh term?"

(NAW Voters, Welsh Language Group, Aberystwyth)

The word 'meysydd' was new to many respondents, although it may be unfamiliar only in its plural form, since the word 'maes' ('area', singular) was readily understood. Suggestions for alternative wordings received from the respondents were 'materion' (matters) or 'pynciau' (subjects).

"Fully explain what is meant by 'meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli' - give a description."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

B) Re-word paragraph one, sentence three to clarify that it refers to current powers and seek an alternative to the opening word, 'caiff'

Opening the sentence with the unfamiliar 'caiff' was not liked by respondents and caused confusion as to whether this referred to current or proposed arrangements. It was apparent that 'caiff' was not widely used and could be easily mistaken for meaning 'the Assembly could / would / will gain powers'. However respondents did not come up with an alternative sentence, commenting instead that it needs to "go back to the translators"! At the very least however, respondents suggested inserting 'Ar hyn o bryd' (At present) at the start of the sentence to make it clear that the paragraph was still explaining the current arrangements.

"Paragraph 1: repeat 'At present' at the start of the phrase 'The Assembly can gain' to emphasise that this is the current situation."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Cardiff)

C) Where possible use simpler, more commonly used words to replace, 'i deddfu', 'fesul', 'bob yn damaid' and, 'gwasanaethau cymdeithasol'

Several of the words in the Welsh language question posed problems as they were unfamiliar to many respondents and were not seen as common parlance. While the definitions usually became clear once the comparable section had been read in English, it did slow down the comprehension of the Welsh question considerable for many of those choosing to read the question in Welsh. To some extent, respondents accepted that the words used were standard and fair translations of the English equivalents. Nevertheless there was a plea to search for simpler alternatives to these words where possible.

"Some of the words in the second paragraph aren't clear - "a hynny fesul pwnc" (on a subject by subject basis) - "hawl i deddfu bob yn damaid" (law making power, bit by bit)."

(Non-NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Aberystwyth)

"Not entirely sure what 'fesul pwnc' means (subject by subject). It could explain exactly what subjects."

(NAW Voter, Welsh Language Group, Conwy)

8.3 Neutrality

A) Clearly separate descriptions of the Yes and No outcomes

Having the Yes and No outcomes in subsequent sentences was seen as confusing by many and also led to accusations that the question was leading. Separating out the Yes and No descriptions into separate paragraphs would help to resolve these difficulties.

B) Ensure the Yes and No outcomes are described with the same level of clarity and with the same emotional tone

Paragraph two, sentence one (description of the Yes outcome) was seen as clear and easy to understand while paragraph two, sentence two (description of the No outcome) was not. This not only compounded difficulties in understanding but also made the question seem leading. A simplification of sentence two would help to resolve this. In revising sentence two, consideration should be given to the view that the language used (especially *'bit by bit'*) and the complexity of the sentence made voting No sound a less positive act than voting Yes. Consideration should also be given to the necessity of repeating information about how law-making powers are transferred between Parliament and the Assembly, as these are already described in paragraph one, sentence three.²⁰

²⁰ Information about how law-making powers are transferred, i.e. *'...which transfer that law-making power bit by bit, with the agreement of Parliament each time.'* If this was removed the sentence would be much simpler – *'If most people vote No, then the present arrangements will continue.'*



C) Reconsider use of the phrase *'Do you agree...'* in the question itself (paragraph three), which may appear leading

Some respondents saw the phrase, *'Do you agree...'* / *'Ydych chi'n cytuno...'* at the start of paragraph three as leading voters to give a Yes answer. This could be avoided by adopting a more neutral tone. Many respondents believed that *'Should the Assembly have powers to pass laws on all subjects in the devolved areas...?'* / *'Dylai'r Cynulliad gael pwerau i ddeddfu ar yr holl bynciau yn y meysydd sydd wedi'u datganoli...?'* was a more neutral wording for the question.



9 Appendix

9.1 Discussion Guides

English Language Focus Groups

OBJECTIVES

- Identify any elements of the referendum question which prove problematic for users in the context of the Commission's question assessment guidelines
- Explore reasons for these problems
- Explore possible ways of addressing these problems
- Examine public awareness of the powers of the Assembly and explore public understanding of the impact referendum outcomes will have on this

Moderator: before focus group starts, explain to respondents that you are here to look at a referendum question to do with the National Assembly for Wales. The first ten minutes will involve a written exercise to be completed individually and after this there will be an open discussion.

1. SELF-COMPLETION EXERCISE **10mins**

(Aim: for respondents to answer the referendum question individually and comment individually on its wording)

- Thank respondent for taking part in the research, introduce self and GfK NOP, reassure re confidentiality. Focus group will last 1½ hours.
- Please look at the sheet on your chair. Without talking, please answer the referendum question as if you were doing so for real. Please do not move on to the worksheet until everyone has finished.
- Now you have all answered the referendum question, please answer the three questions on the worksheet:
 - > On the first page, please summarise what you think the referendum question was asking in your own words.
 - > On the second page, please underline anything you found easy to understand in blue and anything you found difficult to understand in red.
 - > On the third page, please write down what changes, if any, you would like to see made to the referendum question.
- Please complete your worksheets without talking. If you have any questions, raise your hand and I will come to you.
- If you would be happy to tell people how you answered the referendum question, please feel free to do so during the discussion. If you do not want to tell people how you answered, you do not have to. The discussion will focus on your understanding of the question.



2. INTRODUCTION 15mins

(Aim: to introduce the research and allow respondents to introduce themselves, explaining their worksheet responses)

Moderator

- Explain purpose of research:
 - > On [DATE], a referendum will be held in Wales on the powers of the National Assembly for Wales. GfK NOP is carrying out research for the Electoral Commission to test the referendum question with voters.
 - > This research is not about your views of the National Assembly for Wales. It is about the referendum question itself, how well you understand it and how suitable you think it is.
- Reassure re: confidentiality, recording and MRS Code of Conduct

Respondent

- Please tell me your first name and what you thought about the written exercise you have just completed

3. ACCURACY OF RESPONSE 15mins

(Aim: to investigate the extent to which respondents were able to answer the question as they wished)

- Who feels confident that they gave the response they wanted to?
 - > Show of hands – state number for tape
 - > What makes you feel confident about this?
 - > Do you have any doubts that you have given the response you wanted to?
- Who does not feel confident that they gave the response they wanted to?
 - > Show of hands – state number for tape
 - > Why do you not feel confident about this?
 - > What could make you feel more confident about your response?
- What do you think the question was asking?
- What do you think you have voted for?
- Based on the discussion so far:
 - > Who feels they have given the response they wanted to? Why?
 - > Who feels they have not given the response they wanted to? Why not?

4. LITERAL MEANING 15mins

(Aim: to understand how far respondents understood the literal meaning of the question, the words on the page)

- Moderator – We will now discuss the referendum question. When I talk about the referendum question, I mean all the text on page two of your worksheet, including the title, the preamble, the question itself and the multiple choice answer. Confirm respondent’s understanding of this.
- What words would you use to describe the referendum question?

Ease of understanding

- Overall, how easy was the question to understand?
 - > What were the main things that made it easy to understand?
 - > What were the main things that made it difficult to understand?
- Which words and phrases did you identify as difficult to understand?
 - > Why were these difficult to understand?
 - > What do you think they mean?
 - > How far did these affect your understanding of the question?
 - > How could they be changed and improved?
- Did the question give you the right amount of information? Why / Why not?

Neutrality

- How neutral do you think the question is?
 - > To what extent does it encourage people to vote one way or another?
 - Does the question make one option sound better than the other?
 - > Is it written in a factual way or in a way that leads you to a particular response?
 - > How far did this affect your understanding of the question?
 - > Do you think the question could be changed and improved? How?

Improvements

- Do you agree or disagree that the referendum question:
 - > Is set out clearly on the page?
 - > Uses plain language?
 - > Is clear in what it is asking?
 - > Is to the point?
 - > Is not misleading to voters?
- Overall, does the question need changing?
 - > Why do you say this?
 - > What changes would you suggest?



5. MEANING IN CONTEXT 20mins

(Aim: to understand how far respondents understood the impact and consequences of their answer)

- Who had heard about this referendum on the National Assembly for Wales before they came here today?
 - > What had you heard about it?
 - > Why is it taking place?
- What impact do you think the referendum will have?
 - > What will be the outcome if [a yes answer] is given?
 - > What will be the outcome if [a no answer] is given?
- What powers does the National Assembly for Wales have at the moment?
 - > What powers will it have if [a yes answer] is given?
 - > What powers will it have if [a no answer] is given?
- Who feels confident that they understand what the referendum is about?
 - > [Show of hands – state number for tape](#)
 - > What makes you feel confident about this?
- Who does not feel confident that they understand what the referendum is about?
 - > [Show of hands – state number for tape](#)
 - > Why do you not feel confident about this?
- Do you feel more or less confident about what the referendum is about than before you saw the question?
- Going back to the question:
 - > Who feels they have given the response they wanted to? Why?
 - > Who feels they have not given the response they wanted to? Why not?

6. CHANGES FOR IMPROVEMENT 15mins

(Aim: to review and prioritise suggested amendments)

- [On the back of your worksheet, please write down any changes you would like to see made to improve the referendum question. If you do not think any changes are needed, please do not write anything down.](#)
- What changes would you make? Why?
- How necessary are these to help you to answer the question the way you want to?
- Overall, who thinks that the question should be changed?
 - > [Show of hands – state number for tape](#)
 - > What particular improvements need to be made?



- Moderator: please record suggested changes. Please feed back suggestions into subsequent groups. (What do you think of the following wording...?)
- Who thinks the question should remain as it is?
 - > Show of hands – state number for tape
 - > Why do you think changes are not necessary?

7. WELSH LANGUAGE QUESTION (if not spontaneously raised)

(Aim: to gauge understanding of the Welsh language question where people would look at this as well)

- Would anyone look at the Welsh version of the referendum question as well?
- Direct interested respondents to the Welsh language question, then ask:
 - > How easy was the question to understand?
 - > Did it mean the same to you as the question we've already looked at?
 - > Were there any parts of the question you found difficult to understand?
 - > Would you suggest any changes, and why?

English Language Depth Interview

OBJECTIVES

- Identify any elements of the referendum question which prove problematic for users in the context of the Commission's question assessment guidelines
- Explore reasons for these problems
- Explore possible ways of addressing these problems
- Examine public awareness of the powers of the Assembly and explore public understanding of the impact referendum outcomes will have on this

1. INTRODUCTION 5mins

(Aim: to introduce the research and allow respondents to introduce themselves)

Moderator

- Thank respondent for taking part in the research, introduce self and GfK NOP
- Interview will last 1 hour
- Explain purpose of research:
 - > On [DATE], there will be a referendum to do with the National Assembly for Wales. GfK NOP is carrying out research for the Electoral Commission to look at the referendum question with voters.



- > This research is not about your views of the National Assembly for Wales. It is about the referendum question itself, how well you understand it and how suitable you think it is.

- Reassure re: confidentiality, recording and MRS Code of Conduct

Respondent

- Name, family, living situation, voting behaviour, etc.

2. SELF-COMPLETION EXERCISE 10mins

(Aim: for respondent to answer the referendum question and comment on its wording)

- Please could you complete this sheet. Please answer the referendum question as if you were doing so for real.
- Please could you complete this worksheet. There are three pages.
 - > On the first page, please summarise what you think the question is asking in your own words.
 - > On the second page, please underline anything you found easy to understand in blue and anything you found difficult to understand in red.
 - > On the third page, please write down what changes, if any, you would like to see made to the referendum question.

3. ACCURACY OF RESPONSE 10mins

(Aim: to investigate the extent to which respondent was able to answer the question as he /she wished)

- How confident do you feel that you have given the response you wanted to?
 - > What makes you feel confident about this?
 - > Do you have any doubts that you have given the response you wanted to?
- What do you think the question was asking?
- What parts of the question did you find easy or difficult to understand?
- What changes did you suggest and why?
- What do you think you have voted for?
- How confident are you that you have given the response you wanted to?
 - > What makes you feel confident / not feel confident about this?
 - > Do you have any doubts that you have given the response you wanted to?
 - > What could make you feel more confident about your response?

4. LITERAL MEANING 10mins

(Aim: to understand how far respondent understood the literal meaning of the question, the words on the page)

- Moderator – We will now discuss the referendum question. When I talk about the referendum question, I mean all the text on page two of your worksheet, including the title, the preamble, the question itself and the multiple choice answer. Confirm respondent’s understanding of this.
- What words would you use to describe the referendum question?

Ease of understanding

- Overall, how easy was the question to understand?
 - > What were the main things that made it easy to understand?
 - > What were the main things that made it difficult to understand?
- Which words and phrases did you identify as difficult to understand?
 - > Why were these difficult to understand?
 - > What do you think they mean?
 - > How far did these affect your understanding of the question?
 - > How could they be changed and improved?
- Did the question give you the right amount of information? Why / Why not?

Neutrality

- How neutral do you think the question is?
 - > To what extent does it encourage people to vote one way or another?
 - > Does the question make one option sound better than the other?
 - > Is it written in a factual way or in a way that leads you to a particular response?
 - > How far did this affect your understanding of the question?
 - > Do you think the question could be changed and improved? How?

Improvements

- Do you agree or disagree that the referendum question:
 - > Is set out clearly on the page?
 - > Uses plain language?
 - > Is clear and unambiguous?
 - > Is not misleading to voters?
- Overall, in what ways does the question need changing?
 - > Why do you say this?
 - > What improvements would you suggest?



5. MEANING IN CONTEXT 15mins

(Aim: to understand how far respondent understood the impact and consequences of his / her answer)

- Had you heard about the referendum to give the National Assembly for Wales full law-making powers before you came here today?
 - > What had you heard about it?
 - > Why is it taking place?
- What impact do you think the referendum will have?
 - > What will be the outcome if [a yes answer] is given?
 - > What will be the outcome if [a no answer] is given?
- What powers does the National Assembly for Wales have at the moment?
- What powers will it have if [a yes answer] is given?
- Do you feel more or less confident about what the referendum is about than before you saw the question?
- Going back to the question how confident are you that you have given the response you wanted to?

6. CHANGES FOR IMPROVEMENT 10mins

(Aim: to review and prioritise suggested amendments)

- Would you make any changes to the referendum question? What changes? Why?
- How necessary are these to help you to answer the question the way you want to?
- Overall, do you think the referendum question should be improved or that it should remain as it is?
- Moderator: please record suggested changes. Please feed back suggestions into subsequent groups. (What do you think of the following wording...?)

7. WELSH LANGUAGE QUESTION (if not spontaneously raised)

(Aim: to gauge understanding of the Welsh language question where people would look at this as well)

- Would you look at the Welsh version of the referendum question as well?
- Direct interested respondents to the Welsh language question, then ask:
 - > How easy was the question to understand?
 - > Did it mean the same to you as the question we've already looked at?
 - > Were there any parts of the question you found difficult to understand?
 - > Would you suggest any changes, and why?

Welsh Language Focus Group

AMCANION

- Nodi unrhyw elfennau o gwestiwn y refferendwm sy'n peri problemau i ddefnyddwyr yng nghyd-destun canllawiau asesu cwestiynau'r Comisiwn
- Archwilio'r rhesymau dros y problemau hyn
- Archwilio'r dulliau posibl o ddatrys y problemau hyn
- Archwilio ymwybyddiaeth y cyhoedd o bwerau'r Cynulliad ac archwilio dealltwriaeth y cyhoedd o sut y bydd canlyniadau'r refferendwm yn effeithio ar hyn

Cymedrolwr: cyn i'r grŵp ffocws ddechrau, eglurwch wrth yr ymatebwyr eich bod chi yma i edrych ar gwestiwn refferendwm yn ymwneud â Chynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Yn y deng munud cyntaf, bydd gofyn iddynt gwblhau ymarferiad ysgrifenedig, a hynny ar ben eu hunain. Yn dilyn hyn, bydd trafodaeth agored.

1. YMARFERIAD HUNAN-LENWI **10mun**

(Nod: ymatebwyr i ateb cwestiwn y refferendwm yn unigol a nodi eu sylwadau unigol ar eiriad y cwestiwn)

- Diolch i'r ymatebydd am gymryd rhan yn y gwaith ymchwil, cyflwyno eich hun a GfK NOP/Arad, Tawelu mewddwl o ran cyfrinached. Bydd y grŵp ffocws yn para 1½ awr
- Edrychwch ar y daflen ar eich cadair. Heb siarad, ewch ati i ateb cwestiwn y refferendwm ar y dudalen gyntaf fel pe baech yn gwneud hynny go iawn. Peidiwch â symud ymlaen at dudalen dau tan fod pawb wedi gorffen.
- Nawr eich bod wedi ateb cwestiwn y refferendwm, atebwch y tri cwestiwn ar y daflen waith:
 - > Ar y dudalen gyntaf, nodwch yn gryno yn eich geiriau eich hun beth ydych chi'n ei feddwl y mae'r cwestiwn yn ei ofyn.
 - > Ar yr ail dudalen, tanlinellwch unrhyw beth a oedd yn hawdd ei ddeall mewn glas ac unrhyw beth a oedd yn anodd ei ddeall mewn coch.
 - > Ar y drydydd dudalen, nodwch pa newidiadau, os o gwbl, yr hoffech eu gwneud i gwestiwn y refferendwm.
- Ewch ati i lenwi eich taflen waith heb siarad. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau, codwch eich llaw a byddaf yn dod atoch.
- Os ydych chi'n hapus i ddweud wrth bobl sut y bu i chi ateb cwestiwn y refferendwm, mae croeso i chi wneud hynny yn ystod y drafodaeth. Os nad ydych am ddweud wrth bobl, nid oes raid i chi wneud hynny. Bydd y drafodaeth yn canolbwyntio ar eich dealltwriaeth o'r cwestiwn.



2. CYFLWYNIAD 15mun

(Nod: cyflwyno'r gwaith ymchwil a galluogi ymatebwyr i gyflwyno'u hunain, ac egluro'r ymatebion yn eu taflenni gwaith)

Cymedrolwr

- Diolch i'r ymatebydd am gymryd rhan yn y gwaith ymchwil, cyflwyno eich hun ac Arad
- Bydd y grŵp ffocws yn para 1½ awr
- Egluro diben y gwaith ymchwil:
 - > Ar [DYDDIAD], bydd refferendwm yn cael ei gynnal yng Nghymru ar bwerau Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Mae Arad yn cynnal gwaith ymchwil ar ran y Comisiwn Etholiadol i brofi cwestiwn y refferendwm gyda phleidleiswyr.
 - > Nid yw'r gwaith ymchwil hwn yn ymwneud â'ch barn am Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Mae'n ymwneud â chwestiwn y refferendwm, pa mor dda ydych chi'n ei ddeall a pha mor addas ydyw yn eich barn chi.
- Tawelu meddwl ymatebwyr o ran: cyfrinachedd, cofnodi a Chod Ymddygiad MRS

Ymatebydd

- Dywedwch wrthyf beth yw eich enw cyntaf a beth oeddech chi'n ei feddwl am yr ymarferiad ysgrifenedig yr ydych newydd gymryd rhan ynddo

3. CYWIRDEB YMATEBION 15mun

(Nod: ymchwilio i ba raddau yr oedd ymatebwyr yn gallu ateb y cwestiwn fel yr oeddent yn ei ddymuno)

- Pwy sy'n hyderus eu bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi ar dudalen 1?
 - > Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp
 - > Beth sy'n gwneud i chi deimlo'n hyderus am hyn?
 - > A oes gennych chi unrhyw amheuan eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi?
- Pwy sydd ddim yn hyderus eu bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi ar dudalen 1?
 - > Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp
 - > Pam nad ydych chi'n teimlo'n hyderus am hyn?
 - > Beth allai wneud i chi deimlo'n fwy hyderus am eich ymateb?
- Beth oedd y cwestiwn yn ei ofyn yn eich barn chi?
- Dros beth ydych chi'n meddwl eich bod wedi pleidleisio?
- Yn seiliedig ar y drafodaeth hyd yn hyn:
 - > Pwy sy'n teimlo eu bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi? Pam?
 - > Pwy sy'n teimlo nad ydynt wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi? Pam?

4. YSTYR LLYTHRENNOL **15mun**

(Nod: deall i ba raddau yr oedd ymatebwyr yn deall ystyr llythrennol y cwestiwn, y geiriau ar y dudalen)

- **Cymedrolwr** – Nawr byddwn yn trafod cwestiwn y refferendwm. Pan rwy'n siarad am gwestiwn y refferendwm, rwy'n golygu popeth sydd ar ail dudalen eich taflen waith, gan gynnwys y teitl, y rhagarweiniad, y cwestiwn ei hun a'r ateb aml-ddewis. Cadarnhewch bo'r ymatebwyr yn deall hyn.
- Pa eiriau y byddech chi'n eu defnyddio i ddisgrifio cwestiwn y refferendwm?

Dealltwriaeth

- Ar y cyfan, pa mor hawdd oedd y cwestiwn i'w ddeall?
 - > Beth oedd y prif bethau a oedd yn ei wneud yn hawdd ei ddeall?
 - > Beth oedd y prif bethau a oedd yn ei wneud yn anodd ei ddeall?
- Pa eiriau ac ymadroddion y bu i chi eu nodi fel rhai anodd eu deall?
 - > Pam fo'r rhain yn anodd eu deall?
 - > Beth maent yn ei olygu yn eich barn chi?
 - > I ba raddau yr oeddent yn effeithio ar eich dealltwriaeth o'r cwestiwn?
 - > Sut gellir newid y rhain a gwella arnynt?
- A oedd y cwestiwn yn rhoi digon o wybodaeth i chi? Pam / Pam ddim?

Niwtraliaeth

- Pa mor niwtral yw'r cwestiwn yn eich barn chi?
 - > I ba raddau y mae'n annog pobl i bleidleisio un ffordd neu'r llall?
 - A yw'r cwestiwn yn gwneud i un opsiwn ymddangos yn well na'r llall?
 - > A yw wedi'i ysgrifennu mewn ffordd ffeithiol neu mewn ffordd sy'n eich arwain at un ateb yn benodol?
 - > I ba raddau y bu i hyn effeithio ar eich dealltwriaeth o'r cwestiwn?
 - > A ydych chi'n teimlo bod modd newid a gwella'r cwestiynau? Sut?

Gwella

- Ydych chi'n cytuno neu'n anghytuno fod cwestiwn y refferendwm:
 - > Wedi ei osod allan yn glir ar y dudalen?
 - > Yn defnyddio iaith eglur?
 - > Yn glir o ran yr hyn y mae'n ei ofyn?
 - > Yn cyrraedd y pwynt
 - > Nad yw'n camarwain pleidleiswyr?
- A oes angen newid y cwestiwn o gwbl?
 - > Pam eich bod chi'n dweud hyn?
 - > Pa welliannau y byddech chi'n eu cynnig?



5. YSTYR MEWN CYD-DESTUN **20mun**

(Nod: deall i ba raddau yr oedd ymatebwyr yn deall effaith a chanlyniadau eu hateb)

- Pwy oedd wedi clywed am y refferendwm ar Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru cyn iddynt ddod yma heddiw?
 - > Beth oeddech chi wedi ei glywed amdano?
 - > Pam ei fod yn cael ei gynnal?
- Pa effaith ydych chi'n meddwl y bydd y refferendwm yn ei chael?
 - > Beth fydd y canlyniad os mai [ie] yw'r ateb a roddir?
 - > Beth fydd y canlyniad os mai [na] yw'r ateb a roddir?
- Pa bwerau sydd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ar hyn o bryd?
 - > Pa bwerau a fyddai ganddo pe roddir yr ateb [ie]?
 - > Pa bwerau a fyddai ganddo pe roddir yr ateb [na]?
- Pwy sy'n teimlo'n hyderus eu bod yn deall beth yw diben y refferendwm?
 - > [Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp](#)
 - > Beth sy'n gwneud i chi deimlo'n hyderus am hyn?
- Pwy sydd ddim yn teimlo'n hyderus eu bod yn deall beth yw diben y refferendwm?
 - > [Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp](#)
 - > Pam nad ydych chi'n hyderus am hyn?
- Ydych chi'n teimlo yn fwy neu yn llai hyderus am beth yw diben y refferendwm i'w gymharu â cyn ichi weld y cwestiwn?
- Gan edrych eto ar dudalen 1 y daflen waith:
 - > Pwy sy'n teimlo eu bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi? Pam?
 - > Pwy sy'n teimlo nad ydynt wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddent yn dymuno ei roi? Pam?

6. NEWIDIADAU ER MWYN GWELLA **15mun**

(Nod: adolygu a blaenoriaethu'r diwygiadau a awgrymwyd)

- [Ar gefn eich taflen waith, nodwch yr holl welliannau yr hoffech eu gwneud i gwestiwn y refferendwm. Os nad ydych chi'n teimlo bod angen unrhyw welliannau, peidiwch ag ysgrifennu dim.](#)
- Pa newidiadau fydddech chi'n eu gwneud? Pam?
- Pa mor angenrheidiol yw'r rhain er mwyn eich helpu i ateb y cwestiwn yn yfodd yr ydych yn dymuno ei ateb?
- Ar y cyfan, pwy sy'n meddwl y dylid newid y cwestiwn?
 - > [Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp](#)
 - > Pa welliannau penodol sydd eu hangen?



- Cymedrolwr: nodwch unrhyw newidiadau a awgrymir. Cyflwynwch unrhyw awgrymiadau ger bron grwpiau dilynol. (Beth yw'ch barn chi am y geiriad canlynol...?)
- Pwy sydd o'r farn na ddylid newid y cwestiwn?
 - > Ymatebwyr i godi eu llaw – datgan niferoedd ar gyfer y tâp
 - > Pam nad ydych yn meddwl bod angen unrhyw newidiadau?

7. Y CWESTIWN SAESNEG (os oes amser)

(Nod: cael amcan o ddealltwriaeth ymatebwyr o'r cwestiwn Saesneg pan fyddant yn edrych ar hwn hefyd)

- A fyddai unrhyw un yn edrych ar gwestiwn Saesneg y refferendwm hefyd?
- Dangoswch y cwestiwn Saesneg, ac yna gofyn:
 - > Pa mor hawdd oedd y cwestiwn i'w ddeall?
 - > A oedd yn golygu yr un peth i chi â'r cwestiwn yr ydym ni eisoes wedi edrych arno?
 - > A oedd unrhyw rannau o'r cwestiwn a oedd yn anodd eu deall?
 - > A fyddech chi'n awgrymu unrhyw newidiadau? Pam?

Welsh Language Depth Interview

AMCANION

- Nodi unrhyw elfennau o gwestiwn y refferendwm sy'n peri problemau i ddefnyddwyr yng nghyd-destun canllawiau asesu cwestiynau'r Comisiwn
- Archwilio'r rhesymau dros y problemau hyn
- Archwilio'r dulliau posibl o ddatrys y problemau hyn
- Archwilio ymwybyddiaeth y cyhoedd o bwerau'r Cynulliad ac archwilio dealltwriaeth y cyhoedd o sut y bydd canlyniadau'r refferendwm yn effeithio ar hyn

1. CYFLWYNIAD 5mun

(Nod: cyflwyno'r gwaith ymchwil a galluogi ymatebwyr i gyflwyno'u hunain)

Cymedrolwr

- Diolch i'r ymatebydd am gymryd rhan yn y gwaith ymchwil, cyflwyno eich hun a GfK NOP/ Arad
- Bydd y cyfweiliad yn para 1 awr
- Egluro diben y gwaith ymchwil:
 - > Ar [DYDDIAD], cynhelir refferendwm yn ymwneud â Chynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Mae Arad yn cynnal gwaith ymchwil ar ran y Comisiwn Etholiadol i edrych ar gwestiwn y refferendwm gyda phleidleiswyr.



- > Nid yw'r gwaith ymchwil hwn yn ymwneud â'ch barn am Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Mae'n ymwneud â chwestiwn y refferendwm, pa mor dda ydych chi'n ei ddeall a pha mor addas ydyw yn eich barn chi.
- Tawelu meddwl o ran: cyfrinachedd, cofnodi a Chod Ymddygiad MRS

Ymatebydd

- Enw, teulu, sefyllfa byw, ymddygiad pleidleisio ac ati.

2. YMARFERIAD HUNAN-LENWI 10mun

(Nod: ymatebydd i ateb cwestiwn y refferendwm a chynnig sylwadau ar eiriad y cwestiwn)

- A fydddech cystal â chwblhau'r daflen hon. Atebwch gwestiwn y refferendwm fel pe baech yn gwneud hynny go iawn
- A fydddech cystal â chwblhau'r daflen waith hon. Mae hi'n cynnwys tair tudalen:
 - > Ar y dudalen gyntaf, nodwch yn gryno yn eich geiriau eich hun beth ydych chi'n ei feddwl y mae'r cwestiwn yn ei ofyn.
 - > Ar y ail dudalen, tanlinellwch unrhyw beth a oedd yn hawdd ei ddeall mewn glas ac unrhyw beth oedd yn anodd ei ddeall mewn coch.
 - > Ar y drydedd dudalen, nodwch pa newidiadau, os o gwbl, yr hoffech eu gwneud i gwestiwn y refferendwm.

3. CYWIRDEB YMATEBION 10mun

(Nod: ymchwilio i ba raddau yr oedd yr ymatebydd yn gallu ateb y cwestiwn fel yr oedd ef / hi yn dymuno)

- Pa mor hyderus ydych chi eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi?
 - > Beth sy'n gwneud i chi deimlo'n hyderus am hyn?
 - > A oes gennych unrhyw amheuan eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi?
- Beth oedd y cwestiwn yn ei ofyn yn eich barn chi?
- Pa rannau o'r cwestiwn a oedd yn hawdd neu'n anodd eu deall?
- Pa newidiadau y bu i chi eu hawgrymu a pham?
- Dros beth ydych chi'n meddwl eich bod wedi pleidleisio?
- Pa mor hyderus ydych chi eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi ar dudalen 1?
 - > Beth sy'n gwneud i chi deimlo'n hyderus / ddim yn hyderus am hyn?
 - > A oes gennych unrhyw amheuan eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi?
 - > Beth allai eich gwneud yn fwy hyderus am eich ymateb?



4. YSTYR LLYTHRENNOL **10mun**

(Nod: deall i ba raddau yr oedd yr ymatebydd yn deall ystyr llythrennol y cwestiwn, y geiriau ar y dudalen)

- **Cymedrolwr** – Nawr byddwn yn trafod cwestiwn y refferendwm. Pan rwy'n siarad am gwestiwn y refferendwm, rwy'n golygu popeth sydd ar ail dudalen eich taflen waith, gan gynnwys y teitl, y rhagarweiniad, y cwestiwn ei hun a'r ateb aml-ddewis. Cadarnhewch bo'r ymatebydd yn deall hyn.
- Pa eiriau a fyddech chi'n eu defnyddio i ddisgrifio cwestiwn y refferendwm?

Dealltwriaeth

- Ar y cyfan, pa mor hawdd oedd y cwestiwn i'w ddeall?
 - > Beth oedd y prif bethau a oedd yn ei wneud yn hawdd ei ddeall?
 - > Beth oedd y prif bethau a oedd yn ei wneud yn anodd ei ddeall?
- Pa eiriau ac ymadroddion y bu i chi nodi fel rhai anodd eu deall?
 - > Pam fo'r rhain yn anodd eu deall?
 - > Beth maent yn ei olygu yn eich barn chi?
 - > I ba raddau yr oeddent yn effeithio ar eich dealltwriaeth o'r cwestiwn?
 - > Sut gellir newid y rhain a gwella arnynt?
- A oedd y cwestiwn yn rhoi digon o wybodaeth i chi? Pam / Pam ddim?

Niwtraliaeth

- Pa mor niwtral yw'r cwestiwn yn eich barn chi?
 - > I ba raddau y mae'n annog pobl i bleidleisio un ffordd neu'r llall?
 - > A yw'r cwestiwn yn gwneud i un opsiwn ymddangos yn well na'r llall?
 - > A yw'r cwestiwn wedi'i ysgrifennu mewn ffordd ffeithiol neu mewn ffordd sy'n eich arwain at un ateb yn benodol?
 - > I ba raddau y bu i hyn effeithio ar eich dealltwriaeth o'r cwestiynau?
 - > A ydych chi'n teimlo bod modd newid a gwella'r cwestiwn? Sut?

Gwella

- Ydych chi'n cytuno neu'n anghytuno fod cwestiwn y refferendwm:
 - > Wedi ei osod allan yn glir ar y dudalen?
 - > Yn defnyddio iaith eglur?
 - > Yn glir ac yn ddiamwys?
 - > Nad yw'n camarwain pleidleiswyr?
- Ar y cyfan, ym mha ffyrdd y mae angen newid y cwestiwn?
 - > Pam eich bod chi'n dweud hyn?
 - > Pa welliannau y byddech chi'n eu cynnig?



5. YSTYR MEWN CYD-DESTUN **15mun**

(Nod: deall i ba raddau yr oedd ymatebydd yn deall effaith a chanlyniadau ei ateb / hateb)

- A oeddech chi wedi clywed am y refferendwm i roi pwerau deddfu llawn i Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru cyn i chi ddod yma heddiw?
 - > Beth oeddech chi wedi ei glywed amdano?
 - > Pam ei fod yn cael ei gynnal?
- Pa effaith ydych chi'n meddwl y bydd y refferendwm yn ei chael?
 - > Beth fydd y canlyniad os roddir ateb [ie]?
 - > Beth fydd y canlyniad os roddir ateb [na]?
- Pa bwerau sydd gan Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ar hyn o bryd?
- Pa bwerau a fyddai ganddo os roddir ateb [ie]?
- Ydych chi'n teimlo yn fwy neu yn llai hyderus am beth yw diben y refferendwm i'w gymharu â cyn ichi weld y cwestiwn?
- Gan edrych eto ar dudalen 1 y daflen waith, pa mor hyderus ydych chi eich bod wedi rhoi'r ymateb yr oeddech yn dymuno ei roi?

6. NEWIDIADAU ER MWYN GWELLA **10mun**

(Nod: adolygu a blaenoriaethu'r diwygiadau a awgrymwyd)

- A fydddech chi'n newid cwestiwn y refferendwm mewn unrhyw ffordd? Pa newidiadau? Pam?
- Pa mor angenrheidiol yw'r rhain er mwyn eich helpu i ateb y cwestiwn yn y ffordd yr ydych yn dymuno ei ateb?
- Ar y cyfan, ydych chi o'r farn bod angen gwella cwestiwn y refferendwm neu a ddylid ei adael fel ag y mae?
- Cymedrolwr: nodwch unrhyw newidiadau a awgrymir. Cyflwynwch unrhyw awgrymiadau ger bron grwpiau dilynol. (Beth yw'ch barn chi am y geiriad canlynol...?)

7. Y CWESTIWN SAESNEG **(os oes amser)**

(Nod: cael amcan o ddealltwriaeth ymatebwyr o'r cwestiwn Saesneg pan fyddant yn edrych ar hwn hefyd)

- A fydddech chi'n edrych ar gwestiwn Saesneg y refferendwm hefyd?
- Dangoswch y cwestiwn Saesneg, ac yna gofyn:
 - > Pa mor hawdd oedd y cwestiwn i'w ddeall?
 - > A oedd yn golygu yr un peth i chi â'r cwestiwn yr ydym ni eisoes wedi edrych arno?
 - > A oedd unrhyw rannau o'r cwestiwn a oedd yn anodd eu deall?
 - > A fydddech chi'n awgrymu unrhyw newidiadau? Pam?



9.2 Worksheets

As shown on the discussion guides, at the start of each discussion / interview, respondents were asked to complete the referendum question (see Section 2.3). They were then asked to complete a written task. On each Worksheet, three questions were asked.

English version:

1. **What do you think the question is asking? Please explain it in your own words below.** (One page was provided for answers on the Worksheet.)
2. **Please underline anything you found easy to understand in blue and anything you found difficult to understand in red.** (A copy of the referendum question was provided.)
3. **Are there any changes that would have made the question easier to understand?** (One page was provided for answers on the Worksheet.)

Welsh Version:

1. **Beth mae'r cwestiwn yn ei ofyn yn eich barn chi? Ewch ati i'w egluro yn eich geiriau eich hun isod.**
2. **Tanlinellwch unrhyw beth a oedd yn hawdd ei ddeall mewn glas ac unrhyw beth a oedd yn anodd ei ddeall mewn coch.**
3. **A oes unrhyw newidiadau a fyddai wedi gwneud y cwestiwn yn haws i'w ddeall?**