

Sensory issues for people with autism

We hope that your visit to the National Assembly for Wales is comfortable. Before you arrive, we want to let you know that there may be some things that could cause distress.

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The National Assembly for Wales has three buildings - the Senedd, the Pierhead and Tŷ Hywel. You will only be allowed into some areas if you are with a member of our staff.

Security

The Senedd and Ty Hywel have a security procedure in place. When you arrive you will have to go through security. There may also be a police officer at the security desk. You will be asked to empty your pockets into a tray, take off your coat and put your bag through the scanner machine. Your belongings will be returned to you on the other side of the scanner. You are not allowed to bring some items, such as knives, guns or scissors into the building. Such items will be taken off you and, if appropriate, will be returned to you as you leave the building.

You will be asked to walk through an arch. This might beep if you have anything made of metal. If that happens, a security officer will use a hand-held detector and move it around your body to find out what set off the alarm. The detector should not touch your body.

If you or someone with you has autism, you can ask for the beep to be switched off.

Other things to know

– Across all of our buildings there could be other things that you could find stressful.

Sight

– Some people with sensitivity to heights may feel dizzy when looking over the balconies in each of our buildings.

Sounds

- The Call to Plenary bell sounds at 13.25 and 13.30 during term time when Assembly Business takes place. This bell calls Members to the Siambr to vote. The bell is very loud. Visitors who are hyper sensitive to sound may wish to plan their visit to avoid the Call to Plenary bell. You can listen to this sound on our website.
- The sound of the fire alarm going off or being tested. The fire alarm is tested in the Senedd on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 8.45, in the Pierhead on a Monday morning at 9.30 and in Tŷ Hywel on a Monday morning at 9:00. Visitors who are hyper sensitive to sound may wish to plan their visit to avoid the fire alarm. You can listen to this sound on our website.
- The sound of building or maintenance work, such as drilling.
- The sound of the lift audio voice, informing people of the floor they are on.
- Our buildings can host a range of events and activities so can be very busy and noisy.
- In some areas, there might be a film and/or audio tracks being played that can be loud.



- Food / Catering trolleys. As the trolley is pushed along the sound of the wheels on the slate floor can be heard resonating through the Senedd.
- Blinds in the Senedd open and close automatically
- TVs are located around the building.

Smells

- The smell of paint, if the building is being decorated.
- The smell of cleaning products. However, we only use low toxin products.
- The smell of food in some areas.

Touch

- Shaking hands with people is a common practice which may be expected. You can let us know if you do not want to shake hands.
- You might see some art on the walls. You are not allowed to touch this art.

Light

- There can be a big contrast in light as you go into some rooms. In some rooms, the light might change while you are in the room. Some rooms are very bright. Some rooms can be very dark.

Other facilities

- We have different types of toilets available. The hand dryers in the toilets are very loud.
- We have loop systems for people who are deaf and use a hearing aid

If, while you are visiting the Assembly, you find that you need somewhere quiet to retreat to, please speak to a member of staff who will assist you in accessing the quiet room, where you can sit and rest until you feel better.

If you would like further information regarding events that are taking place on the day of your visit, arrange a pre visit at a quiet time or would like to talk about any sensory issues you may have call the Information Line on 0845 010 5500 / 01492 523 200 or email assembly.info@wales.gov.uk or fill in this online form.

