**Cabinet Role-Play Activity**

Students should take on the role of a current cabinet minister and stage a mock-cabinet meeting, in which they discuss one or more of the suggested issues.

Pupils should put forward considered and well thought out arguments, at the end of which the class will present a summary of the meeting and explain how they came to their decision on the debated issue.

Resources:

* Brief description of the role of the cabinet
* List of current cabinet members to participate in this class activity with descriptions of their roles from Welsh Government website (https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers)
* Suggested meeting topics and prompts for discussion

**The Role of the Cabinet**

The Cabinet is the collective decision-making body of the government of the United Kingdom.

The Cabinet is made up of twenty-two senior members of government who are Secretaries of State for all departments across government, as well as some other ministers. Cabinet ministers are selected by the Prime Minister and are heads of government departments. Members of the Cabinet meet once a week during Parliament to discuss what the most important issues for the government are.

**Print off the descriptions below and allocate one to each person in the cabinet role-play groups.** You can decide how many people are in your cabinet groups. Encourage the students to take on their new persona.

**Cabinet Members and Their Roles**

**First Minister of Wales**

You are the **head of the Welsh government** and responsible for the policy and decisions of the government. As head of the government you appoint members of the government and chair cabinet meetings. Your particular responsibilities include international strategic direction on EU policy matters, the promotion of the Welsh Language. *You will decide who speaks and when they are finished!*

**Minister for Health and Social Services**

You have responsibility for the work of the Department for Health and Social Services. You provide strategic leadership for public health, the NHS and social care in Wales.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on the health of the country and our NHS?*

**Minister for Public Services**

You have responsibility for reforming public services and overseeing the direction of Local Authorities in Wales. This includes public services such as the Fire and Rescue Services, Criminal Justice agencies including counter-terrorism, and the collection of Council Tax.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on the work of local government and public services?*

**Minister for Economy, Science and Transport**

You have responsibility for the Department for Economy, Science and Transport. EST is responsible for the devolved Welsh transport system, including road, rail and bus, energy policy including steel, coal, oil and gas, as well as the development of scientific research in Wales.

*Will the proposal you are debating affect the provision of transport or energy policy?*

**Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty**

You have overall responsibility for the Department for Tackling Poverty. Your responsibilities include welfare reform, housing, homelessness and child poverty.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on alleviating poverty in Welsh communities?*

**Minister for Finance and Government Business**

You lead the Department for Business and Finance. You have responsibility for making the most effective use of the Welsh Government’s budget and developing a Welsh Treasury function through powers available through devolution.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on the distribution of the Welsh Government budget?*

**Minister for Education and Skills**

You lead the Department for Education and Skills. Your responsibilities include school standards and curriculum, pupil attainment and Welsh bilingual education.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on education in Wales?*

**Minister for Natural Resources**

You lead the Department for Natural Resources. Your responsibilities include water policy management, sustainable development, marine life and conservation, National Parks and all aspects of planning policy.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on the protection of natural resources and/or sustainable energy development in Wales?*

**Counsel General**

You are the Welsh Government’s chief legal adviser and representative in the courts. Your responsibilities include making representations in writing and in court about any matter affecting Wales, offering legal advice and strategy, as well as organising the legal services within the Welsh Government.

*Will the proposal you are debating have an impact on the rule of law in Wales?*

**Meeting Topics with Ideas for Discussion**

*Discuss how your cabinet minister would address these topics in a cabinet meeting. Put forward your argument and explain why you have reached your particular conclusions. Present a summary of the meeting’s outcome.*

1. **Ban the use of e-cigarettes in public places where there are children.**
2. **Extend the school day to start at 8am and end at 5pm.**
3. **Abolish tickets for all bus services in Wales.**
4. **Wales should stay in the EU.**
5. **Ban the use of e-cigarettes in public places where there are children.**

 Do e-cigarettes have a different effect to normal cigarettes?

 Should the government prevent people from doing things like smoke in public places?

 Who would banning e-cigarettes in public places with children benefit the most? The children or the cigarette industry?

 How would banning e-cigarettes in public places affect children?

**2. Extend the school day to start at 8am and end at 5pm.**

 What are the benefits to pupils of extending the school day?

 Should schools have the flexibility to decide the length of the school day

 What is the impact on parents and the wider community of extending the school day?

 How would the extra time in school be best spent by pupils?

**3. Abolish tickets for all bus services in Wales.**

 If no one pays for bus services in Wales, what will be the impact on government finances?

 Will there be a positive impact on families and local communities if buses were free?

 What are the wider pros and cons for Wales of abolishing tickets for buses e.g. business, tourism, pollution?

 Is this policy fair? Will some people benefit from free transport more than others?

**4. Wales should stay in the EU.**

 Is an In/Out Referendum necessary for the UK? Does it overshadow the finer nuances of reform?

 Does devolution mean that Wales should be able to hold its own referendum if the UK votes to leave but Welsh voters on the whole do not?

 How would the UK’s decision affect the future of the United Kingdom? (For example, would there be knock-on effects for devolution?)

 How would a Welsh referendum affect Welsh’s position within the United Kingdom?

The above issues were chosen for purposes of neutrality and encouraging thoughtful debate.

Depending on school-age, other ideas for discussion may also include:

 Welfare cuts

 Tata steel

 The NHS

 An Independence Referendum

 International Aid

 Tax