



ALL Briefing No. 6

Date : February 2019

## **Theme: Consultation and ALL Representation**

### **Background:**

The relevant section of ALL's constitution says .....

*The Association is established to promote and support the learning and teaching of natural languages.*

*In furtherance of the above object but not further or otherwise the Association may:*

- promote improved standards of language learning and teaching;*
- encourage understanding of the importance of languages, communication and cultural issues at all levels in our global society;*
- promote the development of national language policies that appropriately reflect the linguistic diversity and language needs of the country and its population;*
- advance understanding of the nature and process of language learning and the techniques and approaches for successful language teaching.*

In pursuit of the statements relating to Understanding and Policies the Association issues occasional Press Releases, and contributes speeches and other interventions at relevant events; ALL also seeks members' views on key points.

ALL does not have staffing to allow for a broader communications strand of activity beyond communications with members (to support whom the Association exists) and does not have a bank of policy statements agreed across its membership.

### **ALL representation contacts:**

#### **In the recent past ...**

ALL had access to contacts with officials in UK government, and quasi-governmental bodies through meetings and personal communications.

*(e.g. in conversation with National Director of Languages (when in post), at meetings of National Languages Steering Group and Working Group (while they existed), and with*

*Inspectors, colleagues in QUANGOs (while they existed), and on occasion with Ministers, Government officials, and members of the House of Lords.)*

Since the closure of most of the QUANGOs under the Coalition Government of 2010-15 these routes have become fewer and less clear.

ALL also had closer links with individual journalists than currently.

**Currently:**

ALL is approached for views on some initiatives and policies by DfE, especially when there is a formal consultation.

ALL has informal and formal contacts with bodies who occasionally seek views of members, such as OfSTED, OfQUAL, HMI, some Headteacher Associations, Examination / Accreditation Bodies and other British Languages associations; ALL representatives also express concerns or ask questions through these contacts, attend the All Party Parliamentary Group on Languages (APPG) in the House of Lords, and have links internationally with other Languages Associations.

**Process for responding to external queries / representation :**

Formal consultations are advertised to all members via ALLNet ; members are encouraged to respond individually (as these responses seem to be effective) and, if time allows, to copy the response to an ALL representative who collates views and sends a collective response, subsequently published on the ALL website. These can be found by putting 'consultation' into the search function.

Consultations / Surveys on specific issues (e.g. specific sectors or languages) are advertised also via ALLNet, and often through social media. There is usually no collective response on these matters.

ALL members with concerns to raise are invited to contact [info@ALL-languages.org.uk](mailto:info@ALL-languages.org.uk) for discussion by ALL Council or other grouping, or forwarding to any relevant contacts.

Queries from the Press are usually very time-constrained and do not allow wide consultation; these are usually forwarded to ALL volunteers who have expressed interest in the specific issues they concern – e.g. members of ALL Council.

ALL does not respond to debates on social media, which we think is not an appropriate context for discussion.

Where ALL representatives are invited to events / meetings ALL seeks to identify a representative who can attend easily (i.e. is geographically close / has the available time). This might be an Officer or Trustee or member of Council, or the ALL Development Manager, or another volunteer with a declared specific interest.

**Key messages :**

In public consultations ALL will seek to present a collective response, within the parameters that

- i) ALL members do not share the same opinions on all questions, which makes a digest complex
- ii) ALL members are busy and may not be able to respond to the request for views promptly
- iii) Experience is that individual responses are especially influential

Representatives will be offered specific guidance on their role.

In general representatives attend events in order to gather information, hear proposals and report on any further involvements that are useful for the Association or its members.

Representatives cannot make decisions affecting the Association, and are asked to express clearly that they would refer any requests for ALL support or activity to a relevant committee; likewise, as in any meeting, representatives are asked to make clear any conflicts of interest.

A representative may be 'wearing several hats' and should try to clarify that, when expressing opinions, e.g. through a disclaimer such as 'ALL Members have a wide range of Language interests, views, and approaches. Personally (in the context of my language) ...'

ALL uses its social media presence to promote ALL national and local events, to alert the broader Languages community to news or issues, to support ALL Partners' and Corporate members' announcements, as well as others which match ALL's objectives.

**References :**

ALL Constitution is currently being revised and will appear in its new form on the ALL website in the section 'About' – [www.ALL-Languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-Languages.org.uk)

Charity Commission regulates charities and has rules around lobbying as opposed to informing / campaigning: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities>

**Points for reflection / action:**

ALL presents itself as the voice of members and collects views from members at times of public consultation. Can this process be improved?

Members are encouraged to engage with responding to consultation i) individually and ii) to ALL. Is this practicable?

Do you know a Volunteer who would be interested to collate Consultation responses?  
Or represent the Association at specific meetings?

Are there opportunities at ALL Local meetings to discuss matters of policy, agree on points that could be presented publicly, and share these with ALL Council?

This Briefing has been prepared by volunteers from the ALL Council and is for the benefit of ALL members. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily constitute the policy of the Association for Language Learning.

This Briefing should not be copied or circulated without permission.

Association for Language Learning, 1A Duffield Road  
Little Eaton, Derby DE21 5DR

Join us via  
[www.ALL-Languages.org.uk](http://www.ALL-Languages.org.uk)