

Senedd Election 2026

A guide for homelessness
and housing support workers



Contents

Senedd Election 2026	3
Home: Cymorth Cymru's priorities	4
Political party manifestos	5
How can you make your voice heard?	6
About the Senedd	7
Increase in Members of the Senedd	8
Changes to the voting system	9
New constituencies	10
Registering to vote	11
On election day	12
After the election	13

Senedd Election 2026

On 7th May 2026, the people of Wales will vote in the most hotly anticipated election since 1999.

An increase in the number of Members of the Senedd, a change in the voting system, the retirement of many long standing politicians, and recent swings in the pre-election polling, means that we are likely to see a change in government and the election of a large number of new Members of the Senedd.

This provides an opportunity for people to make their views heard in the lead-up to the election, as well as once a new Senedd has been elected.

This guide has been developed by Cymorth Cymru and the Frontline Network Wales to provide you with the information you need to make your voice heard and ensure the people you support can do the same. A big thank you to the Senedd Commission and the Electoral Commission, which has provided lots of useful information we have incorporated into this guide.

Key changes in this election

From 2026, you'll see some changes to the Senedd.

- **96 Members:** From the election in May 2026, the Senedd will have 96 Members instead of 60.
- **New voting system:** Everyone 16+ will now have one vote, choosing a political party or independent candidate.
- **New constituencies:** Wales will have 16 constituencies. Each constituency will elect six Members.
- **New rules:** Anyone standing for election must live in Wales.
- **More frequent elections:** Senedd elections will take place every four years.

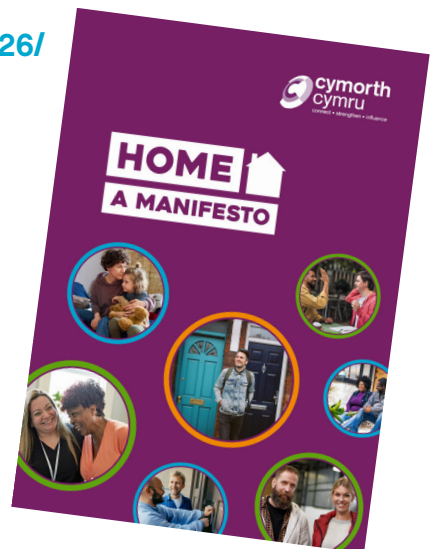
Home: Cymorth Cymru's priorities

Over the last nine months, we have gathered the views of Cymorth Cymru members, frontline homelessness and housing support workers, and experts by experience to develop our priorities for the next Welsh Government.

This has resulted in the publication of our manifesto, which is titled 'Home'. Our priorities are:

- A strategic, cross-government commitment to ending homelessness
- Increased funding for homelessness and housing support services
- A significant increase in social housing supply, aligned with need
- Greater recognition for homelessness and housing support workers
- Ambitious targets for expanding Housing First across Wales
- A Sustainable Future for Learning Disability Supported Living services
- A strategic commitment to prioritise inclusion health

Download the manifesto here:
cymorthcymru.org.uk/manifesto-2026/



Political party manifestos

Each political party publishes a manifesto in advance of an election. This sets out their priorities for the next few years and provides an insight into what they would do if they form the next Welsh Government.

You can read the manifestos from the six political parties who are likely to win seats in the upcoming Senedd elections:

- [Plaid Cymru](#)
- [Reform Wales](#)
- [Welsh Labour](#)
- [Welsh Conservatives](#)
- [Wales Green Party](#)
- [Welsh Liberal Democrats](#)

Comparison of political party manifestos

Political party manifestos are pretty hefty (up to 74 pages long!) and we know that most of our members, frontline workers and people with lived experience don't have time to read through them all.

The Cymorth Cymru team has gone through the manifestos from each of the six main political parties, focusing on the policy areas that most affect our members' services and the people they support – housing, social care, poverty inclusion health, mental health, VAWDASV, refugees and asylum seekers, criminal justice, and equalities.

We have listed the commitments made by each party under each of these headings - lifted directly from the party manifestos. How you chose to use this information, and whoever you chose to vote for, is of course for you to decide.

View our manifesto comparison [here](#).

How can you make your voice heard?

- Contact your local candidates and share our manifesto priorities
- Attend local hustings events and ask a question about homelessness, housing and support.
- Help the people you support to vote
- Make sure you vote on Thursday 7th May!

Find out who your local candidates are:

whocanivotefor.co.uk/elections/senedd.2026-05-07/senedd-cymru-elections/

View Cymorth Cymru's manifesto:

www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/manifesto-2026/

Take a look at our analysis of party manifestos:

www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/senedd-election-2026-comparison-of-political-party-manifestos/

Check out the charity commission's guidance:

www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-campaigning-during-senedd-and-local-elections



About the Senedd

The Senedd is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people.

Its role is to scrutinise the Welsh Government and legislate on devolved matters that are not reserved to the Parliament of the United Kingdom

The Senedd can make laws in the following areas:

- housing and homelessness
- health
- education
- transport
- rural affairs
- the environment
- the Welsh language

What do Members of the Senedd do?

During term time, all Members of the Senedd meet twice a week in the Siambr – the debating chamber – for Plenary. Plenary is where they speak on your behalf, question Welsh Government Ministers, debate and vote on important issues, and pass laws. Most Members also sit on committees. Committees are made up of a small group of Members, from different parties, who look at specific topics or issues that affect the lives of people in Wales.

When they're not working in the Senedd, most Members have a local office in their constituency or region. They hold drop-in sessions, called surgeries, so you can meet them and discuss local issues that concern you. You can also contact them online or over the telephone. They will help if they can, and after hearing from you, your Member could raise your concern in the Senedd. They could ask a question or arrange a debate in Plenary.

Increase in Members of the Senedd

In 2024, a law was passed to increase the size of the Senedd at the time of the next Welsh election in 2026.

The Senedd is the smallest parliament in the UK and one of the smallest in Europe. Increasing the number of Members to 96 will bring it more in line with other countries of a similar size to Wales, like Scotland which has 129 Members and Northern Ireland which has 90.

It is also important to remember that over the last quarter century of devolution, the Senedd has changed a lot. It now has greater powers to pass laws in many more areas which affect your daily life in Wales, and set some Welsh taxes. Despite having much more to do, the number of Members has not changed since 1999.

The 2026 election will return the Members needed to more effectively consider new laws and look at Welsh Government spending in greater detail. This will mean better representation for you, your family and your community, with more elected Members to check the work and spending of the Welsh Government.

Your local candidates:

Find out who your candidates are here:

whocanivotefor.co.uk/elections/senedd.2026-05-07/senedd-cymru-elections/



New voting system

At the Senedd election on 7 May 2026, your vote will count more than ever.

The new system is called a ‘closed proportional list system.’ This means the number of seats a party or independent candidate wins will more closely reflect the percentage of votes they get.

How it works

- Wales will be divided into 16 areas for the 2026 election, called constituencies.
- Each constituency will have six seats in the Senedd, which means six Members will be elected in each area.
- Political parties will list up to eight candidates for each constituency. Independent candidates can also stand for election.
- You will vote for one party or one independent candidate.
- The seats are allocated based on the share of votes each party or independent candidate gets.
- For example, if a party wins three seats, the top three people on their list will be elected to those seats.
- 96 Members of the Senedd will be elected in total.

How does the change make my vote stronger?

At the Senedd election in 2026, all seats will be allocated based on the share of votes each party or independent candidate gets.

The new system means that your vote is more likely to help decide the overall result, because seats in the Senedd will be allocated based on the total share of the vote.

Which means that the final make-up of the Senedd will better represent voters’ choice across Wales.

New constituencies

For a Senedd election, Wales is split into different voting areas called constituencies. When you vote in an election you are voting to elect someone to represent the constituency you live in.

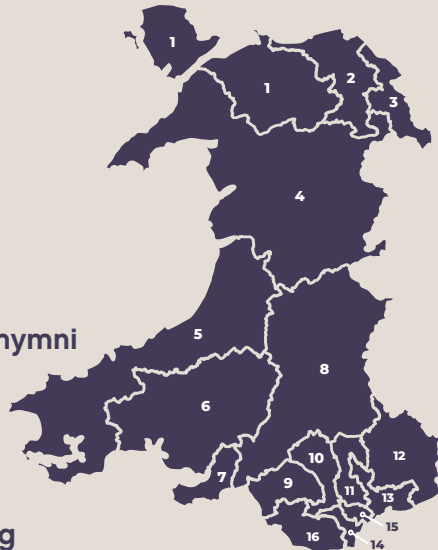
At the 2026 Senedd election, Wales will be divided into 16 constituencies, replacing the 40 it has now.

Six Members of the Senedd (MS) will be elected in each of the new constituencies. This means that wherever you live in Wales, six Members will represent you and your community in the Senedd.

You can contact any or all of them about issues in your local area.

Find your constituency here: constituency.senedd.wales

1. Bangor Conwy Môn
2. Clwyd
3. Fflint Wrecsam
4. Gwynedd Maldwyn
5. Ceredigion Penfro
6. Sir Gaerfyrddin
7. Gwyr Abertawe
8. Brycheiniog Tawe Nedd
9. Afan Ogwr Rhondda
10. Pontypridd Cynon Merthyr
11. Blaenau Gwent Caerffili Rhymni
12. Sir Fynwy Torfaen
13. Casnewydd Islwyn
14. Caerdydd Penarth
15. Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf
16. Pen-y-bont Bro Morgannwg



Registering to vote

If you're aged 16 or over and live in Wales, you can vote in the 2026 Senedd election. But first you need to register. Registering online is simple and only takes five minutes.

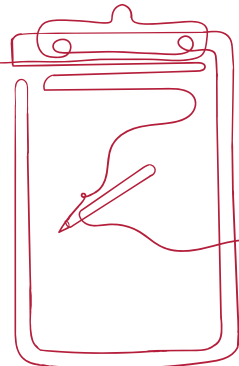
Once you have registered you will be sent a polling card. This will tell you where you need to go to vote (your polling station) on the day of the election.

If you can't get to a polling station, you can register in advance to vote by post, or choose someone you trust to vote on your behalf (this is called a proxy vote). You cannot vote online.

Voting if you don't have a fixed address

If you don't have a fixed address, you can register at either:

- a place where you spend most of your time
- where you have some connection
- the place where you were last permanently registered to vote
- Find out more here: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/voting-if-you-dont-have-a-fixed-address



On election day

Election day is Thursday 7th May 2026.

If you're voting in person, your polling card will tell you where you need to go to vote on the day of the election. This will be somewhere near to where you live, like a school or community centre.

- Polling stations will be open from 07:00 until 22:00
- You do not need to bring your polling card or ID with you

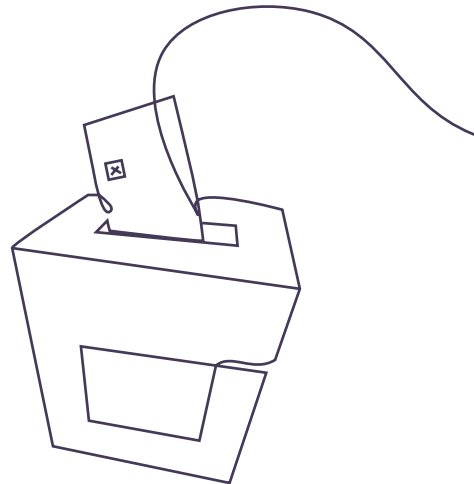
When you arrive, staff at the polling station will ask for your name and address so they can find you on their list of voters for your area. They will give you a ballot paper, and you can go to a booth to cast your vote in private. Pens and pencils are provided.

The ballot paper will show the names of everyone standing for election on each party's list, plus any independent candidates, so you will be able to see who could be elected in your area.

You have one vote, to choose a political party or independent candidate you want to represent you and your constituency in the Senedd.

Once you have made your selection, post your vote into the ballot box

If you're not sure what to do or need any help, the polling station staff will be happy to assist.



After the election

Votes at the 2026 Senedd election will be counted during the daytime on the day after the poll, Friday 8th May 2026. Election counts are managed locally, so the time that each result is announced will be different for each area.

Under the new electoral system, it is highly unlikely that any party will have a majority. As a result, political parties will need to have discussions about who should form the new Welsh Government.

The deadline for the first meeting of the new Senedd is 28th May. At this meeting, the Senedd will elect a Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer.

The deadline for the election of the new First Minister is 3rd June. This will determine who forms the new Welsh Government.

Our plans for after the election

Once we know who has been elected, we will contact Members of the Senedd with information about homelessness, housing and support services in Wales. We will identify people who hold key positions, such as the new Minister for Housing, opposition spokespeople, and members of relevant Senedd committees. We will request meetings and brief them on the key issues affecting our members, frontline workers and people using services.

What can you do?

We will also encourage our members, including frontline workers, to get in touch with their new Members of the Senedd. Let them know who you are, what services you provide, and the difference you make to people's lives within their constituency. Invite them for a visit, and help them to understand the issues you care about.