



# Diversity and inclusion in political parties

A guide to what political parties can do to improve the diversity of candidates at local government and Senedd elections



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an Easy Read version of 'Draft Diversity and Inclusion Guidance for Registered Political Parties'.

November 2024

# How to use this document



This is an Easy Read document. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 43**.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

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# About this guide



This guide is for **political parties** in Wales.



A **political party** is a group of people who have similar ideas about how to run a country.



They do not have to follow this guide by law. But it is important that they do.



A **political party** may want to ask for legal advice about this. They must follow laws. There are laws that say what they can and cannot do to:

- improve **diversity**,
- and share information.



A lot of work has been done to make sure the Senedd runs well.

The Senedd is the Welsh Parliament. The Senedd:



- makes laws for Wales,



- agrees Welsh taxes,



- and checks the work of Welsh Government.



There will be a lot of changes for the 2026 Senedd elections. For example:



- There will be more Members of the Senedd – it will go up to 96 members.



- There will be 16 new Senedd **constituencies** across Wales. A **constituency** is a voting area.



- Each constituency will have 6 Members of the Senedd.



We want the Senedd to be more **diverse** and **inclusive**. We want to make sure the Senedd represents all the people of Wales.



**Diverse** means people are not all the same. People come from different backgrounds, make different choices and have different needs.



**Inclusion** means anyone can take part and has a fair chance.



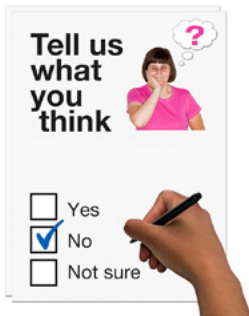
We want **political parties** to be more open about what they are doing to make sure they are **diverse**.



## What do we know about **diversity** in local government and the Senedd now?



At the moment, there is not much information available to the public from **political parties** about **diversity**.



The information we have on **diversity** in local government is from people who chose to respond to a survey. So, it might be missing some things. We have provided some examples below.





## In 2022 we found that in local government:



- 4 in 10 elected councillors were female. In society about 5 in 10 people are female.



- About 5 in 10 councillors were aged 60 or older.



- Almost everyone was from a white ethnic group. In society 94 in 100 people are from a white ethnic group.



- Just over 10 in 100 said they were disabled. In society there are over 20 people in every 100 who are disabled.



## In 2021 we found that in the Senedd:



- About 4 in 10 of elected Members were women.



- Almost everyone was from a white ethnic group.



- About 5 in 100 publicly identified as **LGBTQ+**.

**LGBTQ+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other groups.

This is a community of people who share experiences because of who they love and who they are.

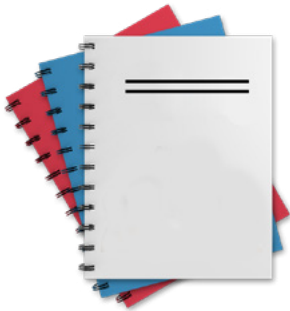


- There was no information about the number of disabled Members.



These figures show there are not enough disabled people, women or people from non-white backgrounds in Welsh politics.

**There are 3 parts to this guidance:**



**Part 1** – is a guide for **political parties** about making plans for **diversity** in local and national Welsh elections.



**Part 2** – is a guide for **political parties** about collecting and **publishing diversity** information on Senedd **candidates**.



**Publishing** means sharing information with the public.



A **candidate** is a person who stands for election, they ask people to vote for them.



**Part 3** – is a guide for **political parties** about women **candidates** for Senedd elections.

## Groups of people for political parties to think about



**Political parties** should think about these specific groups when making plans and collecting **diversity** information:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation – who you are attracted to.
- **Trans status or history** (including **gender reassignment**) – this is about how someone identifies their gender to be and is different from birth.
- Where you are from, and what chances were available in your area to get good services, education and employment.
- Health conditions.
- Previous political experience.
- Caring responsibilities.
- Parental responsibility.
- Language.

# Part 1 – planning for diversity



This part of the guidance is to support **political parties** to:

- make plans about **diversity**,
- and put them in place.



The plans would be called a **diversity** and **inclusion** strategy. It would show what the party will do to increase **diversity** and **inclusion**.



The reasons for doing this are not just about **diversity**. It is also to make sure our politicians reflect a range of experiences.



It will support people to take part in politics who have found it hard to do so in the past.

## How to make a plan



**Political parties** should use research and reports. They need to learn more about the groups that are left out.



They should speak to people to help them. Including people from the groups left out.



They should think about the fact that some people are from a number of different groups. For example, they may be a disabled woman of colour.



The plan should talk about:

- what the party wants to achieve,
- and the actions they will take.



They may have small and big goals they will achieve along the way.



Everyone in the party should be committed to working with the plan.



The plan should be clear and talk about why **diversity** is important.



The plan should say:

- what the big goal will be at the end,
- what will be done to get there,
- and how they will know they have achieved what they set out to.





Some of the actions that should be taken are:

**1. To plan, based on research and information.**

This could mean doing things like:



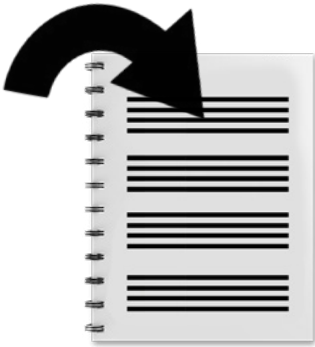
- Make someone an **Equality and Diversity Coordinator**.



- Start checking **diversity** information about **candidates**.

## 2. To think about the culture of the organisation – this means the organisation’s values and beliefs.

This could mean doing things like:



- Making **diversity** part of the party’s **constitution** – this is a set of rules and principles that says how the party should be run.



- Having clear policies in place about **diversity**.



- Making sure members of the party understand **diversity**.

### 3. How candidates will be assessed and chosen.

This could mean doing things like:



- Making sure the way the party selects **candidates** is **accessible** and **inclusive**.



**Accessible** means making sure people can use something whatever needs they have. For example, making information Easy Read.



- Asking questions about their skills or the job. Not about their personal situation.

#### 4. How candidates will be supported.

This could mean doing things like:



- Offering chances to support possible **candidates** to learn the job.

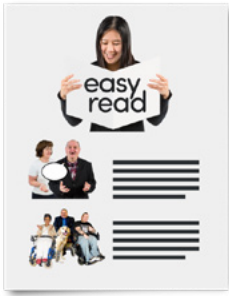


- Giving information about financial support people could have.

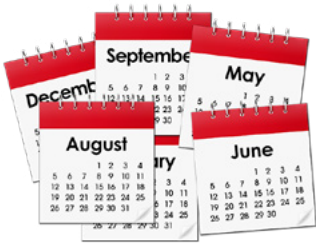


- Thinking about how to protect **candidates** from being treated badly or unfairly.

## Publishing the plan



**Political party** plans (also known as strategies) should be in **accessible** formats. For example, in Easy Read.



They should be **published** at least 6 months before the 2026 Senedd election.



They should be reviewed and updated regularly. And before future elections.

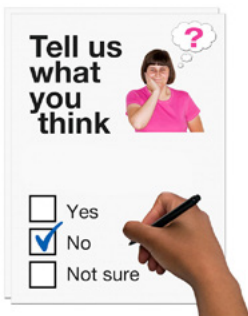


Information in Part 2 will also help shape the plan and actions needed.

## Part 2 – collecting and publishing information about diversity



This is about collecting and **publishing diversity** information about Senedd **candidates**. This will be part of the plans made in **Part 1**.



The information can be collected through a survey. We have made a survey that can be used as a template. It is at the end of this document on **page 27**.



**Political parties** must follow laws about keeping information safe and private.



Information should be **published** about all **candidates**. Including those who become Members of the Senedd, and those who do not.



You should not be able to identify who the individual **candidates** are.



The information should be **published** within 6 weeks of the each Senedd election.



**Political parties** can use the information to learn if they are leaving out any groups of people.



They can look at why and work to change this. This information can be put into their plans.



The plans should be reviewed regularly.

## Part 3 -including women



Members of Senedd should represent the population of Wales. For example, half the population are women, so half of the Members of Senedd should be women. At the moment, only 4 out of 10 Senedd members are women.



There are many benefits to having more women. These benefits would make the Senedd work better.



More women need to be supported into politics. **Part 1** of the guide may help with this.



At the moment, there are more **candidates** who are men than women for Senedd elections.





This could get worse as changes to the numbers of Members of the Senedd increase from 60 to 96.



**Political parties** need to think about the actions they can take to make the numbers more balanced.



And think about how they choose **candidates**.



**Political parties** should think about how to increase the numbers of women.

There are things **political parties** might be able to do like:



- choosing the same number of women **candidates** as men.



- standing women **candidates** in places where they think they are likely to win a seat at the election.



Doing this would mean that it is more likely that half of the Members of the Senedd are women.

# Survey template



## Part 1. Candidate background

### 1. Which elections have you stood as candidate for before?

Local Government elections (Community, Town, County or County Borough Council)

National elections (Senedd or UK Parliament)

I have not previously stood for any election

Other (Please say what)



**2. Have you held elected office before?  
This means you have won in an election  
before.**

Yes – I have previously held elected office

No – I have not held elected office



**3. What is the highest level of qualification you have achieved:**

Degree level or above

GCSE (grades D to G) or below

GCSE (grades A\* to C) or similar

A-level or similar

Higher education

No formal qualifications

Other (please specify):

Prefer not to say



**4. Are you:**

Self-employed

Unemployed: in education or training

Employed: full-time

Unemployed: not in education/training

Employed part-time

Other (please specify)

Prefer not to say



**5. What is your current job?**



**6. What was the job of the person who earned the most in your home when you were aged about 14?**



- 7. Do you care for anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses (not including as part of your job)**

No

Yes – please say how many hours.

Prefer not to say



- 8. Are you responsible for a child or children aged 16 and under?**

Yes

No

Prefer not to say



## Part 2. Candidate information



### 9. How old are you

Age:

Prefer not to say



### 10. What is your sex?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say



## 11. Do you identify as trans, or do you have a trans history?

**Trans status or history (including gender reassignment)** - this is about how someone identifies their gender to be and is different from birth.

Yes (If you would like to, please describe your trans status, for example, non-binary, trans man, trans woman)

No

Prefer not to say



## 12. Are you:

**Bisexual** – you are attracted to men and women.

**Gay or Lesbian** – you are attracted to people the same sex as you.

**Heterosexual or Straight** – you are attracted to people from the opposite sex.

Other sexual orientation (please say what).

Prefer not to say.



**13. What is your ethnic group? For example, White, Black, Asian.**

Please write here:

Prefer not to say



**14. What is your religion or belief?**

Please write here:

Prefer not to say



**15. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?**

Yes

No

Don't know

Prefer not to say



**16. If you answered yes to question 15, do any of these conditions or illnesses affect you in any of the following areas? (Please tick all that apply)**

Vision (for example blindness or partial sight)

Memory

Hearing (for example deafness or partial hearing)

Mental health

Mobility (for example walking short distances or climbing stairs)

Stamina or breathing or fatigue

Dexterity (for example lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard)

Socially or behaviourally - (for example associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) which includes Asperger's)

Learning or understanding or concentrating

Other (please say what)

None of the above

Prefer not to say



**17. If you answered yes to question 15, are you aware of any support schemes available to disabled candidates?**

Yes

No



**18. Do a lack of adjustments or other barriers make carrying out day-to-day activities difficult?**

Yes, a lot

Not at all

Yes, a little

Prefer not to say





**19. Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh? (Please tick all that apply)**

Understand spoken Welsh

Speak Welsh

Read Welsh

Write Welsh

None of the above

Prefer not to say



**20. What is the language you prefer to communicate in professionally?**

English

Welsh

British Sign Language

Other (please say what):

# Hard words

## Accessible

This means making sure people can use something whatever needs they have. For example, making information Easy Read.

## Candidate

A candidate is a person who stands for election, they ask people to vote for them.

## Diverse

This means people are not all the same. People come from different backgrounds, make different choices and have different needs.

## Inclusion

This means anyone can take part and has a fair chance.

## LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other groups.

This is a community of people who share experiences because of who they love and who they are.

## Political party

A political party is a group of people who have similar ideas about how to run a country.

## Publishing

Publishing means sharing information with the public.