

Welsh Democracy

2. The UK Parliament

Parliament

The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is the supreme legislative body for the United Kingdom. At its head is the sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. It has two houses – the elected house, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, whose members are appointed by the sovereign on the advice of the Prime Minister. Wales is represented in both houses. Wales has sent Members to Parliament since the ‘Acts of Union’ of 1536 and 1542-3.

The House of Commons

Following the settlement of 1688 the Commons was comprised of 513 members, increasing to 558 with the addition of 45 Scottish members following the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707. A further 100 MPs were added following the Act of Union with Ireland in 1800. This total of 658 remained through the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867. The number increased to 670 following a redistribution of seats in 1885. Between 1918 and 1922 the Commons had 707 members, the highest in its history, before dropping sharply to 615 following the creation of the Irish Free State and the Stormont Parliament in the North.

Wales had 27 Commons seats until the Reform Act of 1832 when the number rose to 32. This increased gradually through the nineteenth and early twentieth century until it reached 36 in 1918. It increased again to 38 in 1983 and to 40 in 1997. The House of Commons now has 646 members, large in comparison with some other legislatures:

Country	Chamber	Seats	Population per seat
UK	House of Commons	646	95,020
Germany	Bundestag	622	132,636
Italy	Camera dei Deputati	630	91,300
France	Assemblée Nationale	577	103,200
USA	House of Representatives	435	647,000
Spain	Congreso de los Diputados	350	114,000
Canada	House of Commons	308	107,833
Australia	House of Representatives	150	140,048

Of the 646 members of the UK House of Commons, 529 are elected for English constituencies, 59 for Scottish constituencies, 40 for Welsh constituencies and 18 for Northern Ireland. They are all elected on the basis of first-past-the-post, single member constituencies.

	% of UK pop	Seats	% Seats	Population per seat
England	84	529	82	97,251
Scotland	8	59	9	87,610
Wales	5	40	6	74,825
N. Ireland	3	18	3	98,611

The number of Scottish MPs was reduced from 72 to 59 in time for the 2005 General Election of 2005. This followed the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, with its full devolution of legislative powers, save for only limited powers reserved to the UK Parliament. The principle of reduction was enshrined in the Scotland Act 1998, which established the Scottish Parliament.

Some have argued that the House of Commons should be reduced in size. Prior to the 2010 General Election, the leader of the opposition, David Cameron proposed to reduce its membership by 10 per cent, i.e. to 581. That would imply a figure of population per seat of 105,650, placing the UK somewhere between France and Canada. If the German figure for population per seat were used, the UK Parliament would need to reduce to 463.

If the number of seats in Wales were to be set at the current UK average for population per seat, the number would reduce from 40 to 31 or 32. If it were to be set at the current population per seat in Scotland, the number of Welsh seats would reduce to 34. If the Northern Ireland figure were to be used, Welsh seats would reduce to 30.

The Welsh Parliamentary Constituencies

Following the 2005 General Election the Welsh constituencies, their members and parties were as follows:

Constituency	Member	Party
Ynys Mon	Albert Owen	Labour
Caernarfon	Hywel Williams	Plaid Cymru
Conwy	Betty Williams	Labour
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	Elfyn Llwyd	Plaid Cymru
Clwyd West	David Jones	Conservative
Clwyd South	Martin Jones	Labour
Vale of Clwyd	Chris Ruane	Labour
Delyn	David Hanson	Labour
Alyn and Deeside	Mark Tami	Labour
Wrexham	Ian Lucas	Labour
Montgomeryshire	Lembit Opik	Lib Dem
Brecon and Radnorshire	Roger Williams	Lib Dem
Ceredigion	Mark Williams	Lib Dem
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Stephen Crabb	Conservative
Carm. West and South Pems.	Nick Ainger	Labour
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	Adam Price	Plaid Cymru
Llanelli	Nia Griffith	Labour
Gower	Martin Caton	Labour
Swansea West	Alan Williams	Labour
Swansea East	Sian James	Labour
Neath	Peter Hain	Labour
Aberavon	Hywel Francis	Labour
Ogmore	Huw Irranca-Davies	Labour
Bridgend	Madeleine Moon	Labour
Rhondda	Chris Bryant	Labour
Cynon Valley	Ann Clwyd	Labour
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	Dai Havard	Labour
Caerphilly	Wayne David	Caerphilly
Pontypridd	Kim Howells	Labour
Vale of Glamorgan	John Smith	Labour
Cardiff North	Julie Morgan	Labour
Cardiff Central	Jenny Willott	Lib-Dem

Cardiff West	Kevin Brennan	Labour
Cardiff South and Penarth	Alun Michael	Labour
Blaenau Gwent	Dai Davies*	Independent
Islwyn	Don Touhig	Labour
Torfaen	Paul Murphy	Labour
Monmouth	David Davies	Conservative
Newport East	Jessica Morden	Labour
Newport West	Paul Flynn	Labour

* Elected at a by-election in June 2006 following the death of Peter Law MP

Following the 2010 General Election the Welsh constituencies, their members and parties are as follows:

Constituency	Member	Party
Ynys Mon	Albert Owen	Labour
Arfon	Hywel Williams	Plaid Cymru
Aberconwy	Guto Bebb	Conservative
Clwyd West	David Jones	Conservative
Vale of Clwyd	Chris Ruane	Labour
Delyn	David Hanson	Labour
Alyn & Deeside	Mark Tami	Labour
Wrexham	Ian Lucas	Labour
Clwyd South	Sian Elan Jones	Labour
Dwyfor Meirionnydd	Elfyn Llwyd	Plaid Cymru
Montgomeryshire	Glyn Davies	Conservative
Ceredigion	Mark Williams	Liberal Democrat
Brecon & Radnorshire	Roger Williams	Liberal Democrat
Carmarthen East & Dinefwr	Jonathan Edwards	Plaid Cymru
Carmarthen West & Pembrokeshire South	Simon Hart	Conservative
Preseli Pembrokeshire	Stephen Crabb	Conservative
Llanelli	Nia Griffith	Labour
Gower	Martin Caton	Labour
Neath	Peter Hain	Labour
Cynon Valley	Ann Clwyd	Labour
Merthyr Tydfil	Dai Havard	Labour
Blaenau Gwent	Nick Smith	Labour
Torfaen	Paul Murphy	Labour
Monmouth	David Davies	Conservative
Swansea West	Geraint Davies	Labour
Swansea East	Sian James	Labour
Aberavon	Hywel Francis	Labour
Rhondda	Chris Bryant	Labour
Caerphilly	Wayne David	Labour
Islwyn	Christopher Evans	Labour
Ogmore	Huw Irranca-Davies	Labour
Pontypridd	Owen Smith	Labour
Newport West	Paul Flynn	Labour
Newport East	Jessica Morden	Labour
Bridgend	Madeleine Moon	Labour

Vale of Glamorgan	Alun Cairns	Conservative
Cardiff West	Kevin Brennan	Labour
Cardiff North	Jonathan Evans	Conservative
Cardiff South	Alun Michael	Labour
Cardiff Central	Jenny Willott	Liberal Democrat

Wales and UK General Elections

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, following a number of Reform Acts, Welsh representation in the House of Commons was dominated by the Liberal Party. After the First World War this gave way to domination by the Labour Party. The Liberal Party won 33 out of the 34 Welsh seats in the General Election of 1906, and the Labour Party won 32 out of the 36 seats in the General Election of 1966. Traditionally, the Conservative Party has, for historical reasons, struggled in Wales, and in the 2001 election, won no seats in Wales. Plaid Cymru won its first Parliamentary seat in a by-election in 1966, and at the 1992 election won four seats, its highest ever. This reduced to three in 2005.

Welsh seats by party, won at UK General Elections

Election	Lab	Con	Lib/LibDem	Plaid	Ind
2010 May	26	8	3	3	0
2005 May	29	3	4	3	1
2001 Jun	34	0	2	4	0
1997 May	34	0	2	4	0
1992 Apr	27	6	1	4	0
1987 Jun	24	8	3	3	0
1983 Jun	20	14	2	2	0
1979 May	21	11	1	2	0
1974 Oct	23	8	2	3	0
1974 Feb	24	8	2	2	0
1970 Jun	27	7	1	0	**1
1966 Mar	32	3	1	0	0
1964 Oct	28	6	2	0	0
1959 Oct	27	7	2	0	0
1955 May	27	6	3	0	0
1951 Oct	27	6	3	0	0
1950 Feb	27	5	4	0	0
1945 Jul	25	4	6	0	0
1935 Nov	18	11	6	0	0
1931 Oct	16	11	8	n/a	0
1929 May	25	1	9	n/a	0
1924 Oct	16	9	10	n/a	0
1923 Dec	19	4	12	n/a	0
1922 Nov	18	6	10	n/a	0
1918 Dec*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
1910 Dec	5	3	26	n/a	0
1910 Feb	5	2	27	n/a	0
1906 Feb	1	0	33	n/a	0
1900 Oct	1	6	27	n/a	0

* In the 1918 General Election the contest was substantially between the Lloyd George National Coalition and a combined opposition. In Wales the coalition won 20 seats and the opposition 15.

** S.O.Davies, a Labour member who was de-selected by his constituency party on grounds of age – he was 80. He stood as an Independent and won at the 1970 General Election. He died in 1972 and Labour regained the seat the subsequent by-election.

Vote and percentage share of vote by party in Wales

Election	Lab Vote	%	Con Vote	%	Lib / LD Vote	%	Plaid Vote	%
2010 May	531,601	36.2	328,730	26.1	295,164	20.1	165,394	11.3
2005 May	594,821	42.7	297,830	21.4	256,223	18.4	174,838	12.6
2001 Jun	666,956	48.6	288,665	21.0	189,434	13.8	195,853	14.3
1997 May	886,935	54.7	317,127	19.6	200,020	12.4	161,030	9.9
1992 Apr	865,633	49.5	499,677	28.6	217,457	12.4	154,439	8.8
1987 Jun	765,199	45.1	501,316	29.5	304,230	17.9	123,599	7.3
1983 Jun	603,858	37.5	499,310	31.0	373,358	23.2	125,309	7.8
1979 May	795,458	48.6	526,254	32.2	173,525	10.6	132,544	8.1
1974 Oct	761,447	49.5	367,320	23.9	239,057	15.5	166,321	10.8
1974 Feb	745,547	46.8	412,535	25.9	255,423	16.0	171,374	10.7
1970 Jun	781,941	51.6	419,884	27.7	103,747	6.8	175,016	11.5
1966 Mar	863,392	60.7	396,795	27.9	89,108	6.2	61,071	4.3
1964 Oct	837,022	57.8	425,022	29.4	106,114	7.3	9,377	4.8
1959 Oct	841,450	56.4	486,335	32.6	78,951	5.3	77,571	5.2
1955 May	825,690	57.6	428,866	29.9	104,095	7.3	45,119	3.1
1951 Oct	925,800	60.5	471,300	30.8	116,800	7.6	10,900	0.7
1950 Feb	887,984	58.1	418,668	27.4	193,090	12.6	17,580	1.2
1945 Jul	779,184	58.5	241,380	18.1	198,553	14.9	14,321	1.2
1935 Nov	Below		Below		Below		Below	
1931 Oct	Below		Below		Below		Below	
1929 May	577,554	43.9	289,695	22.0	440,911	33.5	609	0.1
1924 Oct	320,397	40.6	224,014	28.4	244,828	31.0	n/a	n/a
1923 Dec	355,172	42.0	178,113	21.1	299,314	35.4	n/a	n/a
1922 Nov	Below		Below		Below		n/a	n/a
1918 Dec	Below		Below		Below		n/a	n/a
1910 Dec	47,027	17.8	81,100	33.8	117,533	47.9	n/a	n/a
1910 Feb	60,496	14.9	116,769	31.9	195,288	52.3	n/a	n/a
1906 Feb	11,865	3.5	65,949	33.8	128,461	60.2	n/a	n/a
1900 Oct	n/a		105,837	58.5	63,932	37.6	n/a	n/a

1935 General Election in Wales

Labour	395,830	45.4
National Labour	16,954	1.9
Conservative	204,099	23.4
Liberal	157,091	18.0
National Liberal	36,156	4.2
National Party	35,318	4.1
Communist	13,655	1.6
ILP	9,640	1.1
Plaid Cymru	2,534	0.3

1931 General Election in Wales

Labour	470,547	44.1
National Labour	24,120	2.2
Conservative	240,861	22.1
Liberal	157,472	14.5
National Liberal	75,717	7.0
Ind. Liberals	71,539	6.6
National Party	11,300	1.0
Communist	35,618	1.4
Plaid Cymru	1,136	0.1
Others	9,100	0.8

1922 General Election in Wales

Labour	363,568	40.8
Conservative	190,919	21.4
Liberal	74,996	8.4
National Liberal	230,961	25.8
Others	32,256	3.6

1918 General Election (Coupon Election) in Wales

Coalition Con.	20,328	3.9
Coalition Lib.	207,377	39.2
Coalition NDP	22,824	4.3
Total Coalition	250,529	47.4
Conservative	39,265	7.4
Liberal	51,382	9.7
Labour	163,055	30.8
Others	24,804	4.7

Turnout at General Elections in Wales and the UK

Election	Turnout Wales	Turnout UK	Election	Turnout Wales	Turnout UK
2010 May	64.9	65.1	1951 Oct	84.4	82.5
2005 May	62.6	61.4	1950 Feb	84.8	84.0
2001 Jun	61.6	59.4	1945 Jul	75.7	72.7
1997 May	73.6	71.4	1935 Nov	76.4	71.2
1992 Apr	79.7	77.7	1931 Oct	79.3	76.3
1987 Jun	78.9	75.3	1929 May	82.4	76.1
1983 Jun	76.1	72.7	1924 Oct	80.0	76.6
1979 May	79.4	76.0	1923 Dec	77.3	70.8
1974 Oct	76.6	72.8	1922 Nov	79.4	71.3
1974 Feb	80.0	78.8	1918 Dec	65.9	58.9
1970 Jun	77.4	72.0	1910 Dec		81.1
1966 Mar	79.0	75.8	1910 Feb		86.6
1964 Oct	80.1	77.1	1906 Feb		82.6
1959 Oct	82.6	78.8	1900 Oct		74.6
1955 May	79.6	76.7			

Seats won by parties across the UK at General Elections

Election	Lab	Con	Lib/LibDem	Plaid	Others
2010 May	258	306	57	3	25 (Others: 19, SNP: 6)
2005 May					
2001 Jun	412	166	52	4	25
1997 May	418	165	46	4	26
1992 Apr	271	336	20	4	20
1987 Jun	229	375	*22	3	21
1983 Jun	209	397	*23	2	19
1979 May	269	339	11	2	15
1974 Oct	319	277	13	3	23
1974 Feb	301	297	14	2	21
1970 Jun	288	330	6	0	6
1966 Mar	363	253	12	0	2
1964 Oct	317	304	9	0	
1959 Oct	258	365	6	0	3
1955 May	277	344	6	0	3
1951 Oct	295	321	6	0	3
1950 Feb	315	298	9	0	3
1945 Jul	393	213	12		22
1935 Nov	154	432	20		9
1931 Oct	52	521	37		5
1929 May	288	260	59		8
1924 Oct	151	419	40		5
1923 Dec	191	258	159		7
1922 Nov	142	345	116		12
1918 Dec*	73	383	161		90
1910 Dec	42	272	271		85
1910 Feb	40	273	275		82
1906 Feb	30	157	400		83
1900 Oct	2	402	184		82

*In the 1983 and 1987 elections the Liberals campaigned under the banner of the Alliance with the SDP.

House of Lords

Members of the House of Lords, sometimes called the Upper House, are appointed by the Queen, these days on the advice of the Prime Minister. For centuries many members sat there by hereditary right, but the House of Lords Act 1999 restricted the number of hereditary peers to 92, and it is the government's intention to remove hereditary peers altogether.

The concept of a Life Peerage was introduced by the Conservative Government through the Life Peerages Act 1958. In 2009 there were 724 members of the House of Lords, including 587 Life Peers and 92 hereditary peers. Of the Life Peers, 42 (7.1per cent) were from Wales. Of the 92 hereditary peers, only four are from Wales or have a distant Welsh connection. Peers either take a party whip or sit as independent cross-benchers.

Although bishops of the Church of England sit in the Lords as 'Lords Spiritual', because the Church in Wales was disestablished in 1920, no bishops for Welsh dioceses are members.

The following are Life Peers from Wales or connected to Wales, listed by party, with the year of their appointment:

Labour Peers

- Lord Brooks of Tremorfa (1979) Jack Brooks, first leader of South Glamorgan County Council and former agent for James Callaghan MP when he was a Cardiff MP
- Lord Prys-Davies (1982) As Gwilym Prys Davies he was a special adviser to John Morris when Secretary of State for Wales 1974-79
- Lord Williams of Elvel (1985)
- Lord Richard of Ammanford (1990) As Ivor Richard QC he was the British Ambassador to the United Nations 1974-79 and an EEC Commissioner 1981-85. He also chaired the Richard Commission appointed to review the powers of the National Assembly for Wales
- Lord Davies of Coity (1997) Formerly Garfield Davies, General Secretary of USDAW 1986-97
- Baroness Gale (1999) Formerly Anita Gale, General Secretary of the Wales Labour Party 1984-99
- Baroness Andrews (2000)
- Lord Evans of Temple Guiting (2000)
- Lord Morgan (2000) Kenneth O Morgan, historian and Vice Chancellor of Abersytwyth University 1989-95
- Lord Morris of Aberavon (2001)
- Baroness Golding (2001)
- Lord Jones (2001) Barry Jones, Labour MP for Flint 1970-83 and for Alyn and Deeside (1983-2001)
- Lord Temple-Morris of Llandaff and Leominster (2001) Peter Temple Morris, Conservative MP for Leominster 1974-97, Independent Member 1997-98, Labour Member 1998-99. He took the Labour whip in 1998.
- Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (2004) Leslie Griffiths, Superintendent Minister at Wesley's Chapel, London, since 1996, and well-known broadcaster on religious matters
- Baroness Morgan of Drefelin (2004) Delyth Morgan, Chief Executive of Breathtrough Breast Cancer
- Lord Rowlands (2004) Ted Rowlands, MP for Merthyr Tydfil 1972-83 and for Cardiff North 1966-70/ Minister of State at the Foreign Office 1976-79
- Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (2004) Janet Royall, Head of the European Commission Office for Wales.
- Lord Kinnock (2004) Rt Hon Neil Kinnock, former Leader of the Labour Party 1983-92 and MP for Bedwellty 1970-83, and for Islwyn 1983-95, European Commissioner 1995-2004
- Lord Anderson of Swansea (2005) Donald Anderson, MP for Swansea East 1974-2005, and for Monmouth 1966-70
- Lord Howarth of Newport (2005) Alan Howarth, MP for Newport East 1997-2005
- Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (2006) Margaret Jones, former UNISON official

Conservative Peers

- Lord Crickhowell (1987) Nicholas Edwards, Secretary of State for Wales 1979-87 and MP for Pembroke.
- Lord Rees (1987) Rt Hon Peter Rees QC, MP for Dover 1970-87, Chief Secretary to the Treasury 1983-85, Minister for Trade 1981-83, Minister of State at the Treasury 1979-81
- Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach (1987) Professor Brian Griffiths was Head of Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit 1985-90
- Lord Howe of Aberavon (1992) Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1979-83, Foreign Secretary 1983-89, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the House of Commons 1989-90
- Lord Garel-Jones (1997) Tristan Garel-Jones, Minister of State at the Foreign Office 1990-93
- Lord Roberts of Conwy (1997) Wyn Roberts, MP for Conwy 1970-97, Minister of State, Welsh Office 1979-94, and the longest serving Minister in the Thatcher administration
- Lord Heseltine (2001) Successively Secretary of State for the Environment 1979-83, Defence 1983-86, President of the Board of Trade 1992-95, Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State 1995-97

Liberal Democrat Peers

- Lord Hooson (1979) Emlyn Hooson, MP for Montgomery 1962-79
- Lord Thomas of Gresford (1996) Martin Thomas QC, deputy High Court judge and Liberal Democrat candidate
- Lord Carlile of Berriew (1999) Alex Carlile, MP for Montgomery 1983-97, and the governments independent reviewer on security issues
- Lord Livsey of Talgarth (2001) Richard Livsey MP for Brecon and Radnor 1985-92 and 1997-2001
- Lord Roberts of Llandudno (2004) Roger Roberts, Superintendent Methodist Minister at Llandudno. President Welsh Liberal Democrats.

Cross-bench peers

- Lord Chalfont (1964) Alan Gwynne Jones, former Defence Correspondent of The Times, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs 1964-70
- Lord Flowers (1979) Professor Brian Flowers, Vice Chancellor, University of London 1985-90, Chancellor of Manchester University, 1994-2001
- Baroness Macfarlane of Llandaff (1979) Professor Jean Kennedy Macfarlane, Professor and Head of Nursing at Manchester University 1974-88
- Lord Elystan Morgan (1981) Elystan Morgan MP for Cardigan 1966-74, Under Secretary of State at the Home Office 1968-70
- Lord Griffiths (1985) William Hugh Griffiths, Lord Justice of Appeal 1980-85, Lord of Appeal in Ordinary 1985-93
- Lord Elis-Thomas (1992) Dafydd Elis-Thomas, MP for Merioneth 1974-83 and Meirionnydd Nant Conwy 1984-92, currently Presiding Officer at the National Assembly
- Lord Snowdon (1961/1999) Upon his marriage to Princess Margaret, Anthony Armstrong-Jones was created Earl of Snowdon in 1961. He was made a Life Peer in 1999.
- Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (2001) Professor Ilora Finlay. One of the first of the 'people's peers' appointed on the recommendation of the House of Lords Commission 2001.
- Lord Rowe-Beddoe (2007) David Rowe-Beddoe, chairman of the Wales Millennium Centre, and chairman of the WDA

Hereditary Peers in the Lords

- Lord Colwyn (1917) Ian Hamilton-Smith, the third Baron Colwyn acceded to the title in 1966
- Lord Moran (1943) Richard John McMoran Wilson, the second Baron Moran acceded to the title in 1977
- Lord Trefgarne (1947) David Trefgarne, the second Baron Trefgarne acceded to the title in 1983
- Viscount Tenby (1957) William Lloyd George, the third Viscount Tenby acceded to the title in 1983

Other Hereditary Peers

Lord Boston (1761)

Earl Radnor (1765)

Lord Bagot (1780)

Lord Dynevor (1780)

Lord Kenyon (1788)

Earl Powis (1804)

Marquess of Anglesey (1815)

Lord Mostyn (1831)

Lord Stanley of Alderley (1839)

Lord Raglan (1852)

Lord Penrhyn (1866)

Lord Harlech (1876)

Lord Swansea (1893)

Lord Glanusk (1899)

Lord Aberconway (1911)

Viscount St. Davids (1918)

Lord Clwyd (1919)

Lord Davies of Llandinam (1932)

Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor (1945)

Lord Ogmores (1950)