

Open Party

Interested candidates' information pack

2026 Welsh Senedd elections

Issued to: Interested candidates
Issued: 07/01/26
Status: Version 13
Filename: Candidates Information Pack V13, 070126.docx



openparty.uk

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1. Introduction

We are delighted you are thinking about standing as a candidate for MS. We have put this information pack together to address the questions you might have and to make you aware of things you need to consider.

This is meant to be a digestible guide rather than an exhaustive manual, so if you can't find the information you are after, please just ask. We are here to help.

Contact

Candidate Liaison Officer: candidate.liaison@openparty.uk

2. Deciding to stand

We want you to make a well-informed decision about whether to stand as an Open Party candidate. These are the key matters you need to consider:

1) **Should I stand**

Some of the questions you may wish to consider

2) **How does one get elected as an Open Party MS**

Our process to selecting the Open Party candidates for the 2026 Senedd elections

3) **The candidate journey**

What to expect during the primary and general elections

4) **Can I legally be an MS?**

Understand the legal restrictions on standing

5) **How we will support you**

How the Open Party will support you in the general election and beyond

6) **Our relationship with you**

The commitments from both sides

3. Should I stand?

Introduction

Standing as an elected representative is a very personal decision and we do not wish to interfere with this. The purpose of this section is to prompt consideration of all the different factors that might go into that decision. The intention is not to be challenging, we very much want you to stand, but we want it to be the right decision for you, us, and the electorate.

Why?

Representing people is a significant responsibility and honour. For a long time, this role has been left to political parties alone. While political parties play a vital role, having them dominate representation entirely impoverishes politics. Very often the new thinking that pushes society forward comes from the outside; the nimble fresh thinkers, not the large incumbents.

The Open Party wants to revitalise our democracy by supporting the 98.5% of people who are not members of a political party to become representatives. There is enormous talent out there. We are determined to allow the UK to benefit from it.

Could it be you?

- Do you have deep experience and knowledge that will really inform national political debate?
- Do you have fresh thinking, or different ideas that just aren't in the common discourse at the moment?
- Do you have the fresh insight into what our country needs in these difficult times?

Ask yourself one question - would my involvement make a positive contribution?

Endorsement

What do your friends and family say? Please ask them; don't be shy; if you are going to ask 100,000's to support you, you might as well start with those nearest to you. Do they encourage and believe in you? If so, it is likely others may too. If you get a raised eyebrow, keep asking.

Right Time

You might be the right person, but is it the right time in your life? Standing in an election is a significant time commitment - we describe in the candidate journey the time commitments to expect. Please consider these seriously, the last thing anyone wants is a candidate to withdraw.

Nearest and Dearest

Please also consider those dependent on or close to you. Please think and discuss this opportunity carefully with them. If elected as an MS, this likely would affect those closest to you. Do they want to be the husband or wife of an MS? Can the family still function with less of your input?

Workload

Do you want the life of an MS? The long hours, the weekend working in the constituency.

A typical working week for an MS is Tuesday to Thursday at the Senedd. Monday and Friday constituency work. Saturday often has a community engagement. Sunday - day of rest / exhaustion.

The official hours are much more civilised than Westminster - following a normal working day of 9am-6pm. However, expect long days.

The Senedd breaks from sitting for 2 weeks at Christmas, 2 weeks at Easter, 6 weeks in summer, plus half-term breaks. However, you will be busy in the constituency during at least some of this time.

The Open Party primary elections have been deliberately designed to be manageable by someone in full employment. However, they are still a commitment; please see Section 5.

Finances

An MS receives a salary of £76,380¹. Leader of a group not in government receive £15,514 + £1,194 per member. There are additional payments for responsibilities within the Senedd (Chairs of committees, etc.). Members leaving office receive one month salary per year of service at the end of their term.

There is an allowance for staffing costs that is capped at £138k². Staff salaries vary from £25k to £57k. Office rent and other operating costs are supported.

Support in your role

MSs have the support of Senedd Research. Senedd Research perform a similar role to the House of Commons Library in Westminster. They provide expert research on policy areas to support your work. They will provide you with the analysis and data to support your work. They are entirely independent and do not provide political support.

In the constituency you will have caseworkers to help manage all your casework. You may wish to share them with other Open Party MSs. In the Senedd you will have researchers to support your political and policy work. You may also wish to have a secretary. You have relative freedoms in the structure of your support staff and are only limited by the budgets (see above)

The Open Party will help you establish your office and staff so that you can hit the ground running. When this is established and operating we will step back and our role become a more objective one as we report back to the Constituency public on your activity in the Senedd.

¹ Annual Review by Independent Remuneration Board 8/1/25 - <https://remunerationboard.wales/>

² Annual Review by Independent Remuneration Board 8/1/25 - <https://remunerationboard.wales/>

Public intrusion into private life

Standing for elected office is bound to bring some public inspection of your private life. Some people are perfectly comfortable with this, others may not be. It is important to consider it from the outset. To help protect you and us, we ask to conduct basic background checks as part of your application including a DBS check and social media activity report.

Conclusion

We want you to stand if Wales could benefit significantly from receiving you as a representative. If you think this could be the case, please seriously consider standing as an Open Party candidate.

It is a generous civic act to give over several years of your life for the wider benefit of all. It can be incredibly rewarding, but there are significant sacrifices to be made and these should be carefully considered. If you think the equation works for you, please apply.

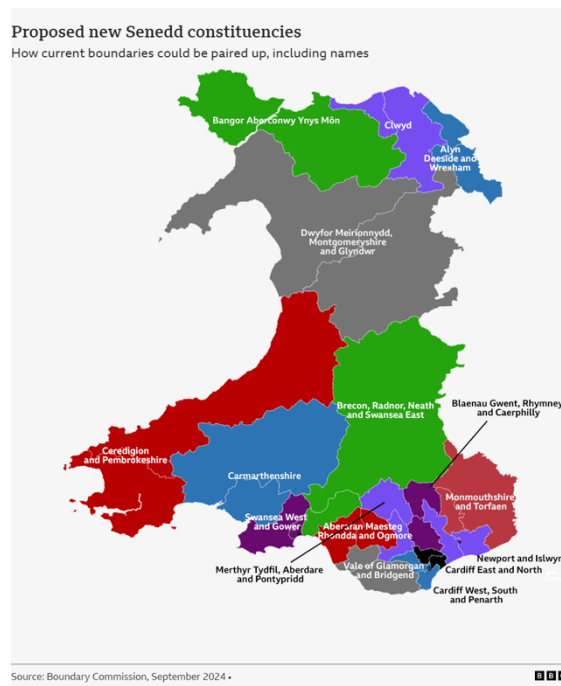
4. How does one get elected as an Open Party MS?

Introduction

Open Party candidates are selected by the public, not by the party. We run open primary elections before every general election to choose the candidate(s). The public vote in those elections for their favourite candidates.

New Senedd election system

The Welsh government has introduced a new election system for the 2026 Senedd elections. The 20 regional and 40 constituency MS's have been replaced with 96 MS's elected across 16 super constituencies, with each super constituency electing 6 MS's.



Each super constituency is roughly two parliamentary constituencies combined. The Casnewydd Islwyn constituency is combined of East Newport and West Newport and Islwyn. There are approximately 100,000 households and 160,000 voters.

The parties provide a list of candidates in a ranked order. The share of the vote they receive determines how many candidates off their list get elected. If a party got 50% of the vote, they would get 3 candidates elected. Independent candidates can also stand.

The Open Party is therefore seeking to field six candidates for the Casnewydd Islwyn constituency. We are operating a pilot, and this is the only constituency we are contesting in 2026. If it is successful, then we will operate nationally at the next UK general election.

We operate a series of primary elections, the outcome of which is the selection of six candidates - ranked in order of public preference for the party list. The party will then contest the election with those candidates as the Open Party candidates. Having more than one candidate is helpful in allowing the range of opinion in the constituency to be represented by a mixture of candidates.

Free thinking

Each Open Party candidate stands on their own agenda; the policies and priorities they wish to pursue if elected. We don't believe that you should have to hang up your beliefs to get elected. Open Party candidates have the freedom to put their agenda before the public.

An elected Open Party representative can also pursue their agenda without interference from the party. Traditional parties apply the whip. Representatives must vote as instructed by their party otherwise they risk having the whip removed and being deselected as the party's candidate at the next election. The Open Party does not apply any whip, Open Party MS's are free to vote, act and speak as they wish. They have been selected and elected by the public, not by the Open Party. Our objective is to get out of the way of the relationship between representative and elector. It is the public who judge the performance of the Open Party representative at the primary election before the next general election.

Binding force

Within the Open Party there will be a diversity of views across the political spectrum. We believe this is healthy. If you are in a silo of similar views, you will learn nothing new, you will not appreciate the other side of the argument. It is the vigorous debate and exchange of information that enables solutions to be found.

What binds Open Party participants: whether candidates, representatives, voters or supporters is the shared belief in the process of actually doing democracy well. The

belief that the sum is greater than the parts and that wisdom accrues to all who participate in a diverse organisation to make each individual a more powerful and effective contributor to the outside.

Despite our political differences the Open Party are a team. We support each other. We play by the rules. We campaign together - rather than an independent politician leafleting a whole constituency on their own, we share the load with each OP candidate leafleting for the others. Reducing the practical work from 100% to 15%. Rather than putting our view to the public in isolation, we put our views forward in conversation with others, which is much more interesting. We are all team players; if we get knocked out of an election, we still participate supporting the team, because we believe in the fairness of the process. If someone else got knocked out I would want them to carry on helping to campaign for me.

Traditional parties creak and groan under the pressure to remain united and sing from the same hymn sheet. The Open Party accepts our diverse differences and does not try to fight them, we embrace the differences, because we are united by our shared belief in the power of democratic action.

Primary elections

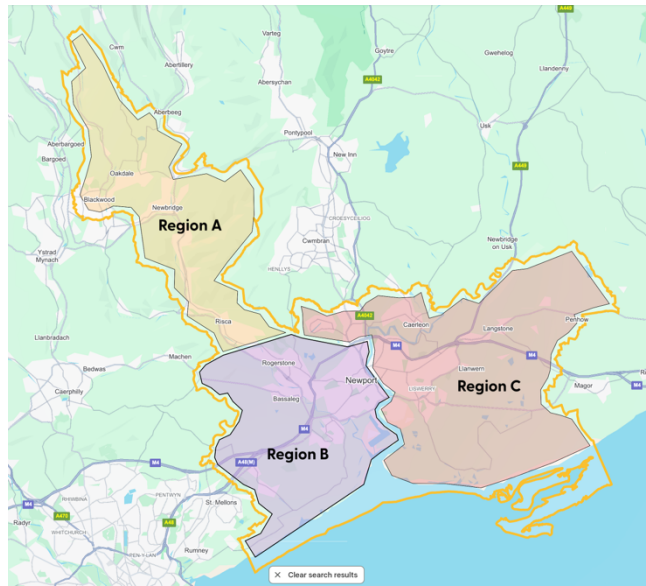
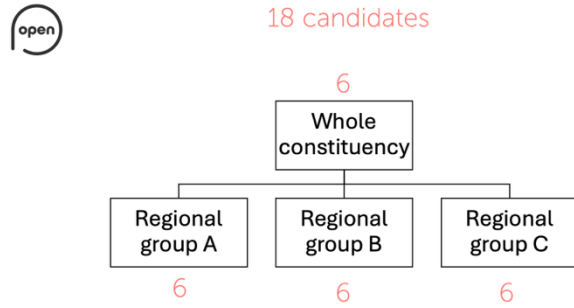
The Open Party runs open primary elections to determine who the Open Party candidates for the Senedd elections will be. They are open to stand in and open to vote. But how do they practically work? Below is a quick guide.

The primary election is divided up into rounds like a sports tournament. In each round there are several regional group elections. Candidates are allocated to one regional group election with a handful of candidates (5-7) in each regional election. It is a small handful in each election so that the public can effectively review and assess the candidates, not so many that this would be impossible. The voting public in each region vote on the candidates in their regional group. The successful candidates in each group then progress to the next round.

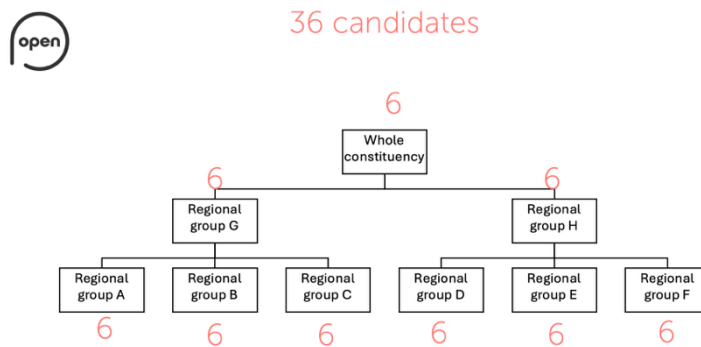
The number of rounds will depend on the number of candidates taking part. There will be a maximum of three rounds. Examples of primary elections are given below.

If there were only 7 candidates coming forward, there would be just 1 (final) round with the whole constituency voting.

The example below shows the format if there were 18 candidates. There would be just 2 rounds: a first round and then a final round. In the first round there would be 3 regional groups with 6 candidates in each as shown. The map below shows the division of the constituency up into regions for the first-round voting. The final round would be the whole constituency.



The example below shows the voting arrangement for 36 candidates. There would be 3 rounds: a first round of 6 regional elections; a second round of 3 regional elections and a final round of the whole constituency.

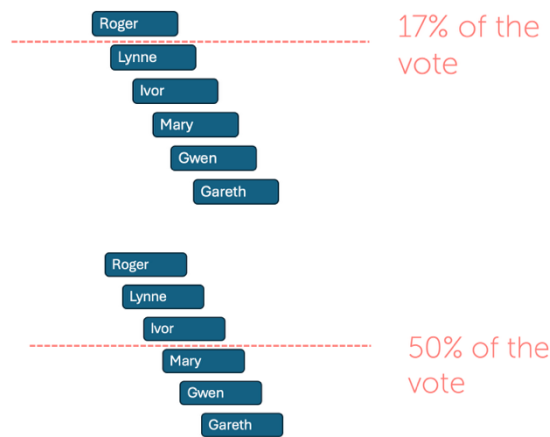


The primary elections take place from mid-February to mid-March.

The 'Party list'

The new Senedd election mechanism requires each party to present a list of candidates in rank order. Candidates will be elected to the Senedd in their priority order on their party list.

In the final round of our primary elections the number of votes each candidate achieves determines their position on the party list. So, the most popular candidate would be first, etc. During the general election for the Senedd, if the Open Party received 17% of the vote, then the top ranked Open Party candidate would be elected to the Senedd. If the Open Party achieved 50% of the votes, then the top 3 ranked Open Party candidates on the list would be elected. See example below.



General Election

After the primary elections the Open Party will have a list of 6 candidates that have been selected by the local public. Those candidates go into the general election for the Senedd on a strong platform to compete with the other political parties. Firstly, each one of those candidates has been chosen by the participating local public, they deserve to be there. Secondly, through the primary election process that has occurred they will have significant public awareness.

The Open Party will contest the general election as a team. It will be a diverse team reflecting all views putting themselves forward to represent the constituency. Campaign work will be shared across the team just like any other party. Everybody working for each other practically, but everybody having their own independent voice. Our campaign newspapers will have a page for each candidate to set out their individual stall. With the Open Party, you don't get six for the price of one.

The Senedd election takes place from late March to 7th May (election day).

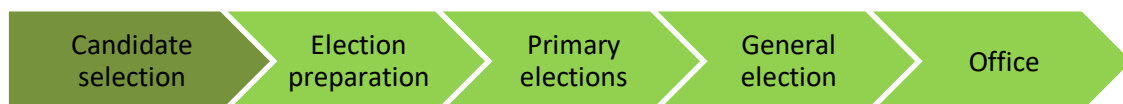
5. The candidate journey

Introduction

Below is your candidate journey. See what is involved along the way.

Timetable

Week commencing	Activity
December / January	<p>Advice OP of intention to stand</p> <p>Prepare for the primary elections - Answer voters' questions; draft your bio, priorities, etc.; record your video address.</p> <p>Submit application form</p>
31 January	Deadline for applications
mid Feb - mid March	OP Primary elections
9 April	Deadline for nomination papers
late March - 6 May	Senedd election campaign
7 May	Election day



1. Attend a candidate information event

Please attend an information event via an online webinar. See events page at openparty.uk for dates and times.

The information events explain the Open Party, what we are trying to do and explain all about standing as a candidate with the Open Party.

2. Notify intention to stand

Please let us know at candidate.liaison@openparty.uk if it is your intention to stand. This will enable us to support you properly, provide necessary information and ensure you are made aware of any changes.

3. Submit application

Please find the application form on our website. The matters covered in the application form are set out in Section 8. The application form is quite lengthy only because we want you to consider all the matters effecting your legal eligibility to stand. It is a criminal offence to stand for election when not legally eligible and hence something that we must get right. We are here to support you with legal advice regarding any queries over your eligibility to stand.

Your application form must be endorsed by two referees. Their reference is not a subjective assessment regarding your qualities to be a MS; it is only affirmation that they know you and to the best of their knowledge the statements you have made in the application form are accurate and that they know no other reason which may damage or prohibit you from standing as a candidate for election to the Senedd.

The deadline for candidate applications has been extended to **31 January 2026**. We strongly recommend that you apply as early as possible so that any issues can be resolved before the deadline. The primary elections commence mid February; we cannot guarantee your inclusion if issues arise that cannot be resolved before then.

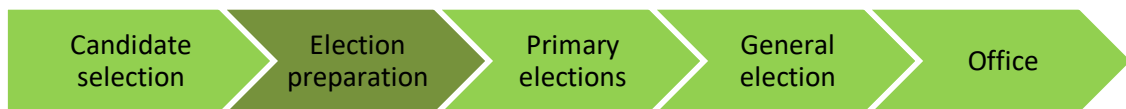
4. Confirmation

We will confirm provisional acceptance within 5 days of your application. It will be provisional as there are various activities such as identity verification, a basic DBS³ check, social media reports, etc, that take time to complete.

³ UK Government Disclosure & Barring Service

5. Candidate Agreement

We will put in place with you a candidate agreement. This sets out the obligations on both parties, most of which is covered in this information pack. For example: Your adherence to the code of conduct, candidate rules. Our obligation to fund your election expenses, represent you equally amongst other candidates, etc.



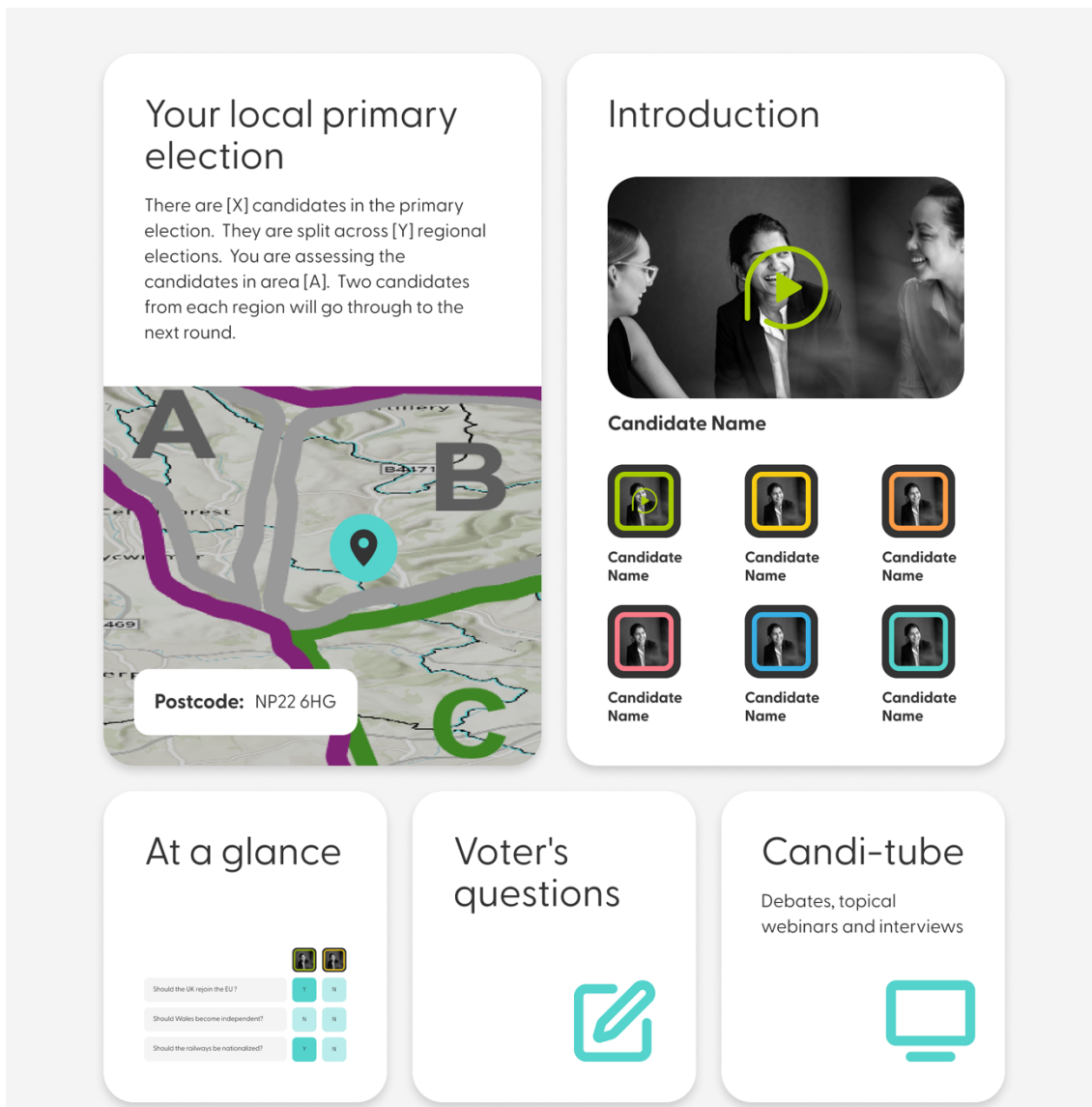
Prepare for the primary election

During the primary election we want the public to really understand you. Our website hosts a variety of different tools for this. Preparing your election materials is a core activity.

Once you submit your application form we will then provide you with a detailed guide to the information you need to submit before the 31 January deadline. The earlier you declare your intention to stand, the more time you have to prepare. Materially all content for the primary election must be provided by the 31 January.

We anticipate that a minimum time needed to prepare is 16 hours. Obviously the more time you put in the more polished it will be.

The primary election website is shown below. Your information will be presented in a comparative fashion alongside up to five other candidates in your regional primary election group. As well as this you will have a set of webpages just for yourself to complete with information as you see fit.



Introduction video

We will ask you to record on your phone in landscape a 30- second election address. You decide what you choose to say; this is your 'elevator pitch'.

At a glance comparisons

This is where your yes / no answers are displayed to different voter questions. You can choose not to answer and you can provide elaboration on your answers. This sections give voters a quick overview of the different positions of candidates.

Voters' Questions

This section contains your answers to voters questions. There will be about 150-200 questions. About 50% of answers will be written, 50% in video format. Text answers

have a character limit - you won't be writing more than 2 or 3 paragraphs at most and for most brevity is needed, so only a few sentences. Video answers are limited to 20 seconds per video. You simply record you answer on your phone (as a selfie in portrait)

Candi-tube

Located here will be subject debates with your fellow candidates that are held as a recorded webinar. The subject might be could be Wales, health, rural affairs, AI etc. These will be about 1 hour long. At least two of these webinars will be recorded before the primary elections commence; the rest will take place live during the primary election.

Also located here will be an interview we will conduct to understand your personality, back story and values to voters.

This is also the site for videos of activities during the primary election itself, such as the Question Time style public debate.

Meet the candidates

Coffee morning
Thursday 17th October,
11am – Workman's Hall,
Islwyn, CF45 6KL

Coffee morning
Thursday 17th October,
11am – Workman's Hall,
Islwyn, CF45 6KL

Primary 'Question time'
Tuesday 30th October,
7:30pm – Caerphilly
Town Hall, CF3 4GH

Their pages
Manifesto's, priorities, biographies. See information on each candidate.

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

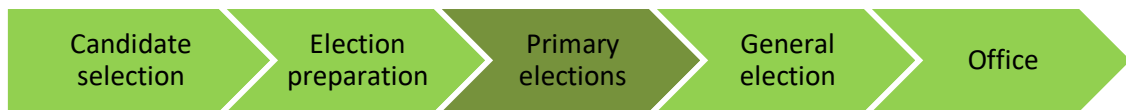
Candidate Match
Find your perfect representative. Answer the same questions as the candidates and find which candidates your views are most closely aligned to.

Their pages

This is where you will have a dedicated page on the Open Party website for you to set out your stall. This is for you to use as you see fit. You may wish to include your top priorities; particular issues you want to secure action on; explain your skills, experience and background; or your vision for Wales. It is entirely up to you. We will provide you with some suggestions of what to include and an example of what your pages could look like, as a guide. Expect to create written and image content to fill the space on 2 pages of A4, plus videos totalling 2mins long. We will help with formatting and editing, and we will undertake all the technical aspects, but the content is yours. You can include images, and also longer form videos.

Candidate Match

This is like a dating service but instead of matching people romantically, we match voters with their perfect candidate by comparing responses to questions from both. This provides a match score to indicate which candidates are most closely matched to the voter.



Primary election - time commitment

The time commitment has been deliberately designed to be manageable for someone working full time. At the same time, to provide proper information for the public to assess candidates there will be necessary availability that we require any candidates to commit to. This is described below.

Please see Section 4 for details on how the open primary election works. The primary elections commence in mid-February and run through to end of March. There will be 1 - 3 rounds with each round taking approximately a fortnight. A typical timeline is shown below, but please note this is a guide and is subject to variation in response to the candidate numbers and other matters.

Week	Round
1	Round 1
2	Round 1
3	Round 2

Week	Round
4	Round 2
5	Round 3
6	Round 3

You will need to be available during this period to participate in the election activities. During each election week you should expect to be participating in election activities 2 evenings, and 1 weekend morning or afternoon. A typical schedule is shown below:

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					Coffee morning	
evening webinar			evening live debate			evening webinar

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					Town centre Q&A	
evening webinar			evening webinar			

Primary election activities

In each round you will be allocated to a regional election group along with approximately five other candidates. The electorate on the electoral roll in your region will be able to vote to decide whether you go through to the next round. They will see all the information you have prepared online. The following live activities will also take place:

Live 'Question Time' style debate

You will take part in a one evening panel debate with the other candidates in your election group. The public will be invited to attend and field their questions to you. The event will be recorded and broadcast live on the Open Party website.

Topic Web debate

We will run live topic webinar debates in the evenings. The public will be able to watch these live and ask questions.

Candidate coffee morning

Meet your potential constituents at a weekend coffee morning in the constituency. A chance for one-to-one discussion with your electorate.

Town centre Q&A

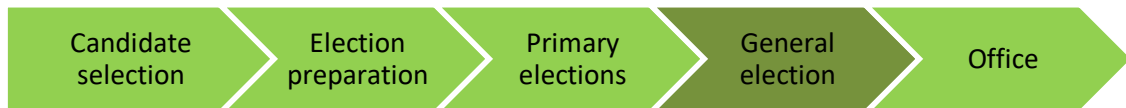
We will invite you to attend a town centre location on a weekend to meet residents and answer their questions.

Campaigning

We want to create a level playing field for candidates. We don't want some candidates to be advantaged because they have a child who is brilliant promoting them on social media, or loads of friends who can leaflet doors for them. This would create an unfair advantage. These skills and attributes can come in during the general election, but not the primary election. Therefore, we require candidates to not campaign outside the Open Party ecosystem. We will promote you on the website, on social media and in print alongside other candidates on an equal basis. You cannot undertake your own independent promotion.

Primary Election Results

The primary election will take place mostly online, but with postal votes and potentially some in person voting. You will be placed on the Open Party list in the ranking order of votes received in the primary election.



Senedd Election

Hopefully you will progress through the rounds of the open primary election and be selected as one of the six Open Party candidates for the Senedd elections. If selected, you will be standing on a powerful platform of having already been publicly chosen to represent your constituents.

The Open Party will nominate you as one of its candidates for the election. Nomination papers will be filed during the last week of March or first week of April.

The general election campaign will run from the end of March up to (but excluding) election day; 7th May 2026.

During the general election we ask candidates to be available at least 8 hours a week for campaigning; ideally 16 hours. This might be 2 days at the weekend, or one day at the weekend and two - three evenings in the week, as a guide. We recognise that people may have working day obligations.

The Open Party will campaign as a team, but with information on each of the candidates. We will run a campaign that is competitive with the other major parties.

Your agreement with us obliges you to not seek to stand for another party, or as an independent in the 2026 Senedd election. It would be unfair for us to invest in your promotion for you to then pursue alternative means of election.

Campaign Expenditure

Running an election campaign is an expensive process. The regulated cap on expenditure is approximately £12,000 per candidate. We provide the funding for all your campaign.

Advice

Standing as a candidate in a national election is a novel process for nearly everyone. We will provide you with the advice you need to undertake this. This may be legal advice, campaigning advice, etc.

Campaign Support

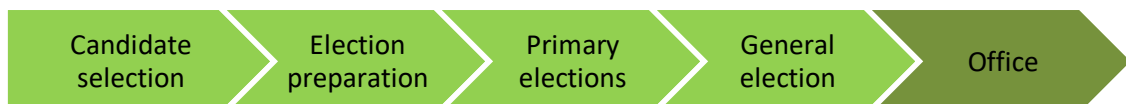
We will provide the design, public relations, social media, print, promotion elements of the campaign. Everything you would expect from a party supporting a candidate. We have dedicated external professional team - Social media managers, graphic designers, PR, Media buyers, etc. This is in addition to our internal campaign team.

Leg work

You will sit in a stable of 5 other candidates and hopefully by election time, a band of practical supporters. Leg work such as door to door canvassing, leafleting will not be on one set of shoulders, but shared.

Brand

The Open Party is new and not yet a national brand, however, we will likely be a locally recognised brand through the candidate selection process. As an Open Party candidate, you will have recognition and attention from the public.



Establishment in Office

If you are elected as an MS, we will help you set up your offices in the Senedd and in the constituency, find staff and establish yourself in the Senedd. This can be a daunting prospect and we want you to hit the ground running. You may wish to share staff resource with other Open Party MSs.

Reporting back to constituents

Twice a year we will report back to your constituents on how you are progressing; your activity in the Senedd, committee participation, campaigns, speeches, local action, etc. We want to help you concentrate on being an effective MS by taking on some of the work of voter engagement. We will be objective and factual in our reporting. We want to encourage a move away from positive washing; toward objective information that is of more use and more interest to the public. You are of course free to undertake your own communications with constituents as well.

Re-selection

At the end of your term in office, you have the right to stand for reselection through the primary elections that will be run in advance of the next Senedd election in 2031. You would have an incumbent advantage in terms of public awareness of you, but you would face competition to be the Open Party candidate from other public candidates.

6. Eligibility: Can I be an MS?

Introduction

There are the constraints laid down by [legislation](#)⁴ on qualification to stand as a candidate to be an MS. It is very important that both yourself and ourselves address this matter thoroughly early on. It is a criminal offence for you to make a false statement on your nomination papers as to your qualification for being elected; therefore, we both need to understand now if there is any reason why you may not be able to stand.

The full range of disqualifications is complex and if you are in any doubt about whether you are qualified, you must do everything you can to check that you are not disqualified now. If you have any concerns over qualification, we can provide you with legal advice (you will not be charged, we will suffer the cost).

Below is a comprehensive summary of qualification tests based on information provided by the regulator⁵. Please carefully review and let us know as soon as possible if you have any concerns about your qualification against these criteria.

Age

You must be at least 18 years old on the day you are nominated to stand. This is the day that application papers are submitted to the local authority by the Open Party nominating you as one of our candidates.

The latest nomination date is Thursday 9th April. However, we plan to submit nominations earlier than this so we can start campaigning for you. We therefore need you to be 18 on 31st March 2026.

⁴ Key legislation includes Government of Wales Act 2006 (as amended by the Senedd and Election (Wales) Act (2020) and Senedd Cymru (Disqualification) Order 2020. This is not an exhaustive list of the legislation relating to disqualification. It is the candidate's own responsibility to ensure they are not disqualified.

⁵ [Electoral Commission - Guidance for candidates and agents Part 1](#)

Qualifying citizenship status

You must be one of the following:

- A British citizen
- A qualifying Commonwealth citizen
- A qualifying foreign citizen
- A citizen of the Republic of Ireland
- A citizen of the European Union who is resident in the United Kingdom

"Qualifying"⁶ means someone who is not subject to immigration controls, or who is, but has indefinite leave to remain.

Please check your citizenship status from your passport and other government documentation. We will require you to evidence your citizenship.

Residency

To stand as a Member of the Senedd, you must be registered as a local government elector (registered to vote) at an address within a Senedd constituency on the nomination date⁷. Please note this does NOT have to be the constituency that you wish to stand in, but you must be a registered voter somewhere in Wales. Also, technically you do not have to be registered in Wales at any other point than the nomination date.

Disqualifications

As well as needing to be 'qualified'; you then need to ensure you are not 'disqualified' for any of the following reasons.

⁶ Local Government Act 1972, section 79, For the purposes of this section, a person is a qualifying Commonwealth citizen if he is a Commonwealth citizen who either—

(a) is not a person who requires leave under the Immigration Act 1971 to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, or

(b) is such a person but for the time being has (or is, by virtue of any enactment, to be treated as having) indefinite leave to remain within the meaning of that Act.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/79>

⁷ Schedule 1A of the Government of Wales Act 2006 – para 8 (inserted by the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024) says that someone is disqualified from being a member of the Senedd or a candidate in an election to be a member of the Senedd if they are not registered as a local government elector at an address within a Senedd constituency on the nomination day.

You may be disqualified if you:

- o have a public office already, such as **judge, police officer, etc.**
- o have received court orders in relation to **bankruptcy**
- o have been **imprisoned** for more than a year
- o have been convicted of **electoral or sexual offences**
- o **contest** more than one constituency at the same time

You must not be disqualified from standing on either nomination day or polling day. The reasons for disqualification are summarised below; the full schedule of disqualifications are set out in this [legislation](#)⁸.

Public offices

Certain office-holders are disqualified from becoming an MS. These are specified in [legislation](#)⁹ and include these common roles:

- o Judges
- o Civil servants
- o Members of the regular armed forces
- o Members of a police force
- o Member of the staff of the Senedd¹⁰

For completeness these specific roles below are also disqualified:

- o Members of a legislature of any country or territory outside the UK
- o Auditor General for Wales
- o Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- o Lord-lieutenant, lieutenant or high sheriff of any area in Wales
- o Commissioner or Investigating Commissioner for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights
- o Children's Commissioner, Deputy Children's Commissioner,
- o Commissioner for Older People, Deputy Commissioner for Older People
- o Welsh Language Commissioner, Deputy Welsh Language Commissioner and members of the Advisory Panel to the Welsh Language Commissioner

Certain other office holders who are listed in Senedd Cymru (Disqualification) Order 2020 may stand as candidates at a Senedd election, but, if successful, would have to

⁸ Government of Wales Act 2006 (as amended), the Senedd Cymru (Disqualification) Order 2020

⁹ Table in Part 2 of Schedule 1A to the Government of Wales Act 2006

¹⁰ However, direct employees of MS's rather than the Senedd Commission are not disqualified. Anyone who is unsure about whether they are disqualified should speak to the Senedd's HR department to confirm their employment arrangements and/or seek their own legal advice.

resign their office before taking the oath of allegiance (or make the corresponding affirmation)

Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy is not grounds for disqualification. If you have been adjudged bankrupt by a court in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, you are not disqualified on that basis. However, if you are currently subject to any of the following bankruptcy orders below you will be disqualified:

- o a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order
- o a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order
- o your estate has been sequestrated by a court in Scotland and you have not been discharged

Imprisonment and court decisions

You are disqualified under the Government of Wales Act 2006 if you have been convicted of an offence and have been sentenced or ordered to be **imprisoned** or detained indefinitely or for more than a year and are detained anywhere in the UK, the Channel Islands the Isle of Man or elsewhere in the European Union or are unlawfully at large when you would otherwise be detained. The nomination of a person disqualified on this basis outlined in the paragraph above is void, and the Returning Officer will reject their nomination.

You are also disqualified under the Government of Wales Act 2006, if you have been convicted or reported guilty of a corrupt or **illegal electoral practice** or of an offence relating to **donations**. The disqualification for an illegal practice begins from the date a person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for three years. The disqualification for a corrupt practice begins from the date a person has been reported guilty by an election court or convicted and lasts for five years.

You are also disqualified if you are subject to the notification requirements of, or an order under Part 2 of the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**.

Standing in more than one contest

You cannot stand in more than one constituency or in more than one region.

Public office restrictions

There are several restrictions on people who hold particular roles in public service.

MPs standing at the Senedd election

Members of the House of Commons cannot be members of the Senedd. While they can stand as candidates at the Senedd election, if successful, an MP would have to resign their seat in the House of Commons within eight calendar days of being elected to the Senedd.

You may also be a candidate at both a UK Parliamentary and a Senedd election. In the scenario where you are returned as a Member of the Senedd and are subsequently elected to the House of Commons you will be disqualified from being a member of the Senedd if you do not resign your seat in the House of Commons within eight calendar days of being elected as an MP.

Members of the Scottish Parliament or Northern Ireland Assembly

Members of the Scottish Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly can stand as candidates at a Senedd election, but, if successful, they would have to resign their post before taking the oath of allegiance (or make the corresponding affirmation).

Members of the House of Lords

Members of the House of Lords can stand as candidates at a Senedd election, but if successful, they would have to already have leave of absence from the House of Lords or have made an application for leave of absence which has not been withdrawn or refused.

Welsh County (Borough) Council Members

Members of the council of a county or county borough can stand as candidates at a Senedd election, but, if successful, they would have to resign their post before taking the oath of allegiance (or make the corresponding affirmation¹¹). However, a councillor can remain a councillor if the expected day of the next scheduled county/county borough election is within 372 days of the vote day. They can remain a councillor until the fourth day after the next scheduled council poll.

¹¹ A corresponding affirmation is a non-religious alternative to the oath of allegiance.

7. Our relationship with you

Code of Conduct

The Party recognizes that candidates, by virtue of their position, are subject to a heightened level of scrutiny compared to ordinary members of the public. Candidates should be aware that their conduct in both public and private spheres has potential to adversely affect the reputation of the candidate and the Party.

Any behaviour that is unlawful, deceitful, dishonest, violent, or threatening, whether in public or private life, may be deemed to bring the Party into disrepute. Such conduct may result in the Open Party withdrawing its support for your candidacy.

We require candidates, as we do with other persons involved with the Open Party, to adhere to the Code of Conduct¹²

Personal Disclosures

We request as part of the application form¹³ for you to provide various disclosures in relation to personal areas that could impact your candidacy. Some of these items are to help determine your legal eligibility to vote regarding age, residency, citizenship, etc. Other disclosures are regarding matters that might bring the party into disrepute. These matters help us make a fair assessment regarding risks of disrepute and also help us to protect you in relation to any sensitive personal matters. This disclosure is the foundation for a strong relationship.

It is the candidate's responsibility to inform Open Party of any changes to their personal disclosure status as and when they arise. Should matters later emerge that should have been disclosed, this could damage confidence such that candidacy is removed.

¹² Code of conduct (as amended from time to time) available at: openparty.uk/standing/

¹³ Application form (as amended from time to time) available at: openparty.uk/standing/

Political affiliation

Past or current membership of another party is not a prohibition to becoming an Open Party candidate. We request disclosure of memberships so that we may discuss with you and understand the context of your application to be an Open Party candidate.

Background research

Like any political party, we need to conduct appropriate and reasonable due diligence on potential candidates. This is to protect both the party and you. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, we will always obtain your consent before commissioning any third-party research.

We ask permission to commission a social media presence (SMP) report and a DBS¹⁴ check. The SMP report is a common check used by employers. The SMP report will examine publicly available data online, including social media profiles, to identify potential behavioural risks and reputational issues. The screening process will rely on artificial intelligence to analyse social media and other internet presence and report to us on risk indicators:

- Extreme views or opinions: This includes content that reveals extreme or radical personal beliefs.
- Hate and discriminatory behaviour: Searches look for language and actions that suggest hatred or discrimination against others.
- Illegal activities: the company used by Open Party screens for evidence of a person promoting or engaging in illegal activities.
- Inappropriate or undesirable content: This covers a range of content deemed inappropriate for a professional setting.
- Potential addiction or substance abuse: The service may uncover content related to potential substance abuse.
- Sexually explicit content: The screening identifies explicit material posted online.
- Violent content: Checks are performed for content suggesting or promoting violence.

The SMP process is designed to be GDPR compliant regarding your privacy.

¹⁴ UK Government Disclosure and Barring Service

Endorsement

We require your application form to be endorsed by two referees. These referees are not providing a subjective reference; they are simply confirming to us that:

1. That they know no reason why the information that you have provided is inaccurate.
2. That they know no other reason which may damage or prohibit you from standing as a candidate for election to the Senedd

The referees must be registered to vote in the UK.

Party Rules

We have, and are developing during the pilot, rules we require candidates to follow. The primary election is a new process and so the candidate rule book¹⁵ is developing in parallel with the elections. We require candidates to abide by the party rules in relation to Candidates as they are amended from time to time. Any new rules will be communicated and there will be no retrospective application.

By way of example, it will be a candidate rule that during the primary elections all campaigning must be authorised by the Open Party. The reason for this is to ensure a level playing field. Some candidates may have access to greater volunteering support or be more proficient on social media. We want what people say, not how loud they say it, to be the distinction. Therefore, campaigning will take place predominantly within the explained Open Party ecosystem of its website, advertising, events. Individual candidates undertaking independent campaigning for themselves, such as issuing their own leaflets, or their own social media posts will therefore not be allowed under the Party rules.

Privacy

The Open Party handles all personal data in compliance with GDPR privacy regulations. We recognise that the personal information we hold regarding candidates and applicant candidates may contain particularly sensitive data because of the disclosure and investigations made to support eligibility for candidacy. We take your personal data extremely seriously. Sensitive data is either password protected or retained in hard copy only and is accessible only by limited staff. Please read our privacy policy. We are happy to address any questions you have regarding privacy.

¹⁵ Candidate rule book first draft will be published 17/11/25 and is to be considered before applications are accepted.

Free speech

Promotion of honest and respectful speech is a core objective of the Open Party. We do not wish to interfere with your right to express yourself. However, there are circumstances where we would impose restrictions and/or sanctions; these include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- statements that are unlawful / illegal
- statements that threaten the maintenance of communication platforms licenses we rely upon
- statements that bring the Open Party into disrepute
- statements which do not achieve a sustainable balance between respect and free speech

Status in Open Party

As a prospective candidate your relationship with the Open Party will be governed by specific rules and agreements for an Open Party Candidate. You will not be a member of the Open Party by virtue of being a candidate and we do not require you to be a member to stand for the Open Party.

8. Next steps

From You

Here are the next steps:

1. Talk to us - candidate.liaison@openparty.uk We will answer your queries and are here to support you.
2. Attend a candidate information event. See openparty.uk
3. Undertake your own independent research
4. Consult family and friends
5. Advise us of your intention to stand by email to candidate.liaison@openparty.uk
6. Prepare your materials for the primary election
7. Submit the application form to candidate.liaison@openparty.uk

The **deadline** for applications and submission of primary election materials¹⁶ is **31 January 2026**.

From us

We will:

- o Confirm receipt of your application form and primary election materials within 48 hours
- o Confirm provisional acceptance of your candidacy in the primary election within 5 days
- o Send you the candidate's agreement. (This will reference the key documents: your application form, code of conduct, candidates rules, etc).
- o Host a meeting with other candidates to take you through all the next stages or preparing for the primary election.

¹⁶ Answers to questions, videos, your pages, etc.

9. Help

We are here to help you every step of this journey starting now.

Thank you for considering the opportunity of standing as an Open Party candidate. We very much hope this is something you can take forward.

If you have any questions, please get in touch; we have a dedicated Candidate Liaison Officer - Layla, who is here to help you.

Contact: candidate.liaison@openparty.uk

Yours sincerely,

The Open Party