



More in
Common

Is Welsh politics at a turning point?

More in Common research for
the Plaid Cymru Spring
Conference

The future of Plaid Cymru

Fuelled by defections from Labour and a widespread desire for change, Plaid Cymru looks likely to lead the next government of Wales.

As the party's support has grown, its support base has change significantly: disillusioned Welsh Labour voters are switching to Plaid Cymru, meaning progressives now make up more than half of its supporters, while many of its former right-leaning populist voters have moved to Reform UK.

Welsh people describe Plaid Cymru as “hopeful” and “optimistic”, but some also see it as “dangerous” and “unknown”. In a nation where four in five voters believe it's time for change, the party needs to convince voters that it represents something genuinely new, while also proving that it is ready for government.

Progressive Activists



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

Incrementalist Left



...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

Established Liberals



... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise and believes the system broadly works

Sceptical Scrollers



...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

Rooted Patriots



...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

Traditional Conservatives



... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

Dissenting Disruptors



... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

The politics of the Seven Segments in Wales

	Progressive Activists	A growing core of Plaid Cymru's base - and the only segment who are more likely to support than oppose Welsh independence.
	Incrementalist Left	Another key element of Plaid Cymru's coalition. While Incrementalist Left share Progressive Activists' left-leaning views, they are far less likely to support independence and tend to feel optimistic about the current state of devolution.
	Established Liberals	Despite their centre-right position on many issues, Established Liberals have emerged as Labour's strongest remaining supporters in Wales - as the party has lost voters on the left to Plaid and on the right to Reform UK.
	Sceptical Scrollers	Over half of this extremely low-turnout group did not vote in 2024, and only 27 per cent say they are likely to vote in the Senedd in 2026. Those who do plan to vote are split across four parties.
	Rooted Patriots	Once a key part of Labour's support base in Wales, Rooted Patriots tend to say that the Labour Party has abandoned its working class base, as the segment have moved to Reform UK.
	Traditional Conservatives	These extremely unionist voters have traditionally been the Conservative Party's base, but that support is collapsing as they are now far more likely to vote Reform.
	Dissenting Disruptors	Traditionally Plaid Cymru voters or non-voters, this segment has enthusiastically turned toward Reform UK as the main anti-system party in Wales.



The public mood in Wales in 2026

Wales in a word

In a word, how would you describe
Wales at the moment?



The public mood in Wales in 2026 is one of disillusionment.

Asked to describe the current state of Wales in a word, “poor”, “struggling” and “broken” rank highly - although “good” and “beautiful” also feature heavily.

More than half of Welsh people (53 per cent) say that things are getting worse in Wales - albeit far lower than the 75 per cent of Britons who say the UK is getting worse.

I think I feel sorry for the young kids starting off. I've got two of my own. The fact that, compared to when I started looking for jobs, it's like every job is now minimum wage.
Karen, administrator, Colwyn

A change election

Four in five Welsh people say it's time for change

Thinking about how Wales is being run at the moment, which of the following comes closest to your view?

● It's time for change ● We need to stick with the plan



Labour is facing a double-incumbency effect in Wales.

After 27 years of Labour Government in the Senedd, four in five Welsh people (including 47 per cent of Labour voters) believe it is time for a change in how Wales is being run. After just 18 months in Westminster, Labour's support in Wales has halved as the party has lost support across the left, right and centre.

"Absolutely anything to give Labour a bloody nose right now I think will be a good thing."
Simon, retired, Colwyn

"It's been 26 years, I think. They've got big elections coming up, haven't they, in May? And I think it's time for change. But then again, what with?"
Sally, hospitality worker, Wrexham

How the Welsh public view each party

Reform UK



Labour



Conservatives



Plaid Cymru



In a word, how
would you describe
(...) at the moment?

Reform is currently leading as the party for change

49% of Welsh people say Reform represents change; 7 in 10 say Labour means "more of the same"

Thinking about the following political parties, would you say they represent change, or represent more of the same?

● They represent change ● Don't know ● They represent more of the same



Source: More in Common • February 2026
Welsh respondents only

With Welsh Labour expected to campaign on a message of “staying the course”, many voters see a Labour vote as backing the status quo - with 7 in 10 saying the party represents “more of the same”.

Against this backdrop, Plaid Cymru and Reform UK are competing to position themselves as the main vehicle for change. While voters are far more likely to think Plaid represents change than Labour or the Conservatives, Reform UK is still leading as the main ‘change party’. It’s possible that Plaid’s history in coalition government might mean some voters associate it with the status quo.

“South Wales have been quite strong at voting Labour for many, many years and it's kind of like that's all we know (...) So I think people have got kind of a bit fed up of what we know and want to change, but really don't really know what the change is.”

Fiona, Labour - Reform switcher, Caerphilly



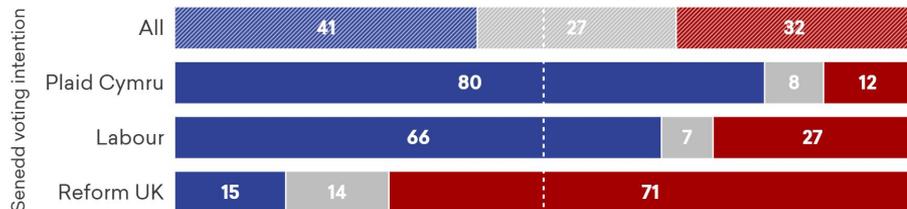
**Is devolution on the
ballot?**

Devolution as a key faultline in 2026

A third of Welsh adults think the Senedd should be abolished

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

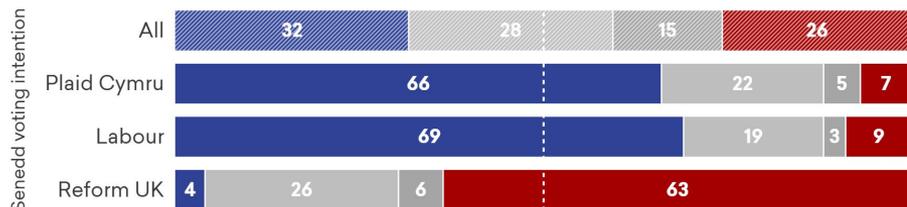
- The Welsh Parliament (Senedd) should NOT be abolished
- The Welsh Parliament (Senedd) should be abolished
- Don't know



Most Reform voters think devolution has failed

Do you think the creation of the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) has been....

- A good thing for Wales
- Neither a good thing nor a bad thing for Wales
- Don't know
- A bad thing for Wales



Reform UK has provided an electoral vehicle for voters disillusioned with devolution in Wales.

A third of Welsh adults-- and seven in ten Reform UK voters - support abolishing the Senedd. Meanwhile, 26 per cent of Welsh people, and more than three in five Reform voters, say devolution has been bad for Wales.

However, Welsh Labour voters are aligned with Plaid voters in their support for devolution.

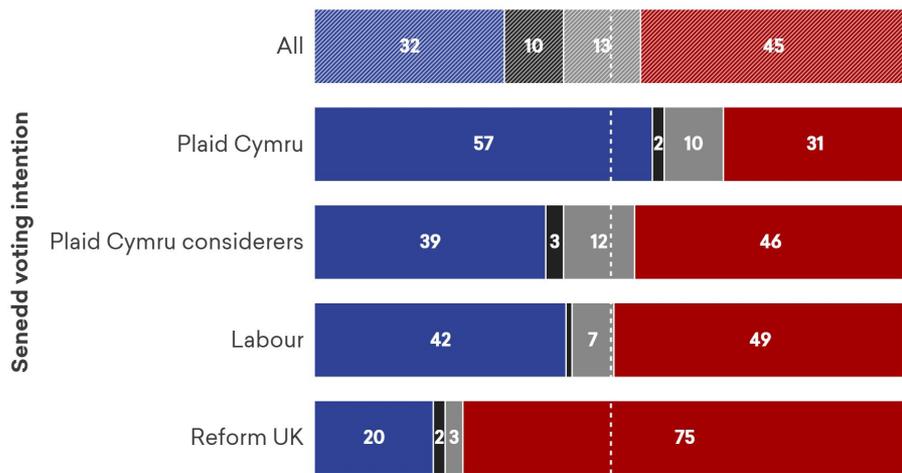
In this context, support for the Senedd represents a point of shared ground between Plaid Cymru's core voters and many defectors from Labour.

A renewed independence debate could split Plaid's voter pool

While most Plaid supporters would back independence, the party's "considerers" would vote against it

And if the independence referendum was held today, how would you vote?

● For Wales becoming an independent country ● I would not vote ● Don't know
● Against Wales becoming an independent country



Plaid Cymru's preference for a slower, long-term approach to independence may align with Welsh public opinion, as **attempting to open an independence debate within a first term of government could risk splitting the party's support base.**

While most Plaid supporters back independence, many of those who say they would consider voting for the party – as well as Labour and Reform UK voters – tend to say they would vote against it.

Plaid Cymru is winning the respect contest

Rhun ap Iorwerth is the leader most likely to be seen to respect the people of Wales

For each of the following, how much respect do you think they have for the people of Wales?

● A great deal ● A fair amount ● Don't know ● Not much ● None at all



Respect is the public's number one demand from politicians, and any government that hopes to win back the public trust in an age of anti-politics will need to demonstrate real respect for ordinary Welsh people.

This is a measure on which Rhun ap Iorwerth performs particularly well: 43 per cent of Welsh people say he respects the people of Wales - more than the proportion who say the same for any other leader.

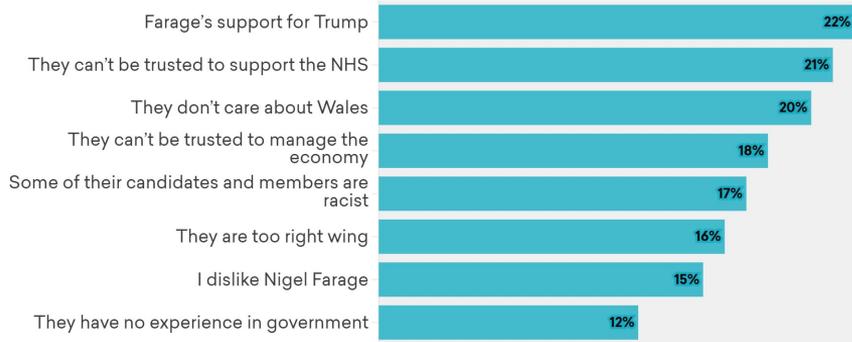
This may also present an electoral liability for both Nigel Farage and Keir Starmer: majorities of Welsh people say that these leaders lack respect for the people of Wales.

Is Reform “too English for Wales”?

A perception that Reform doesn't care about Wales is a key barrier among Welsh voters

In your view which of the following, if any, are the main reasons NOT to vote for Reform UK? Select up to three.

(Top 8 answers shown)



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Source: More in Common, February 2026 • Excluding Reform voters and those planning to vote for Reform.

A potential barrier to Reform UK's growth in Wales appears to be a perception that the party lacks a distinctively Welsh offer. For some voters, Reform is seen as disconnected from the Welsh language, its culture and priorities.

It's worth noting that Reform UK voters are the least likely voter group to identify as *mostly or entirely Welsh* - so this critique may resonate more with Plaid voters.

This may be another opportunity for Plaid Cymru to stand out as a vote for change that is distinctly Wales-focused.

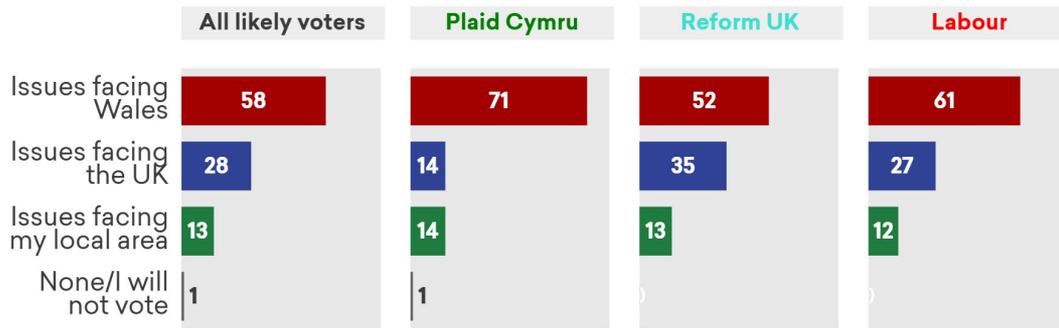
“Farage, he's got no interest in the Welsh language or Welsh culture. He said on many occasions he wants to get rid of Welsh education in schools. He'd be an absolute disaster for this country. He has no pro-Welsh policies whatsoever.”

Adrian, company director

A voice for Wales, not a voice for independence

Plaid voters are the most likely to prioritise issues facing Wales

When deciding how you will vote in the upcoming Senedd Election, which of the following is more important to you?



Plaid Cymru voters are the most likely voter group to say that issues facing Wales will influence their vote, rather than issues facing the UK. However, majorities of Labour and Reform voters also want Welsh issues to be at the forefront.

Plaid's unique position as an independent Welsh Party helps to set it apart from Labour and Reform UK.

A focus on Welsh issues can help Plaid Cymru to stand out - while avoiding splitting the public by renewing the independence debate.

"I think they're the only party really that has their sole focus on Wales. (...) And again, my politicians are politicians at the end of the day so I don't give my full trust in them at all. But I do feel like they give a voice to Wales and they don't play down to Westminster."
Nia, Welsh language teacher, Colwyn Bay



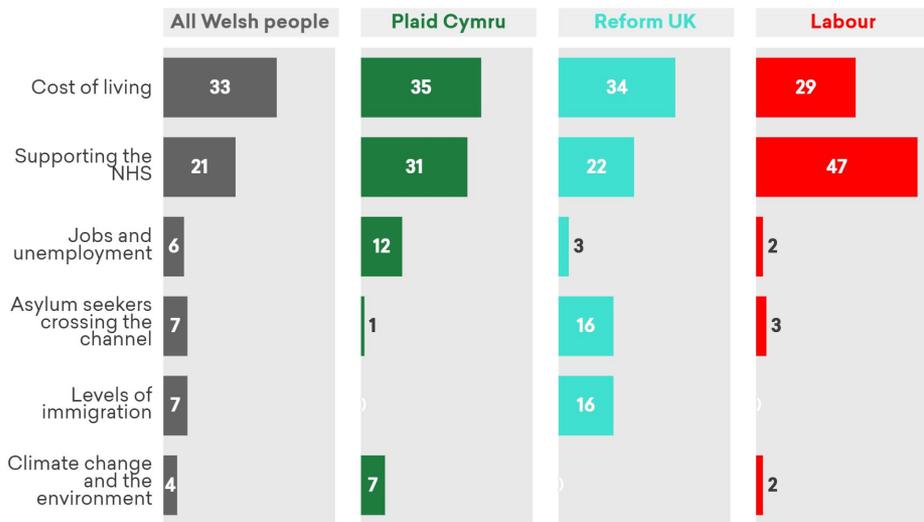
Voter expectations on key issues facing Wales

Welsh voters want a focus on the cost of living and NHS

Across politics, Welsh voters want the next government to prioritise the cost of living and NHS

And which ONE of these should be the single biggest priority for the next Welsh Government?

(Top 6 answers shown)



Asked about the top priority for the next Welsh Government, tackling the cost of living and supporting the NHS rank highest across all voter groups.

Labour voters are more likely than average to prioritise the NHS, while Plaid Cymru voters place greater emphasis on jobs and unemployment.

Reform UK voters are twice as likely as the Welsh public overall to say migration should be the top priority. However, they are still twice as likely to select the cost of living (34 per cent) as immigration levels (16 per cent).

Renewables are winning the debate in Wales - but Net Zero is polarised

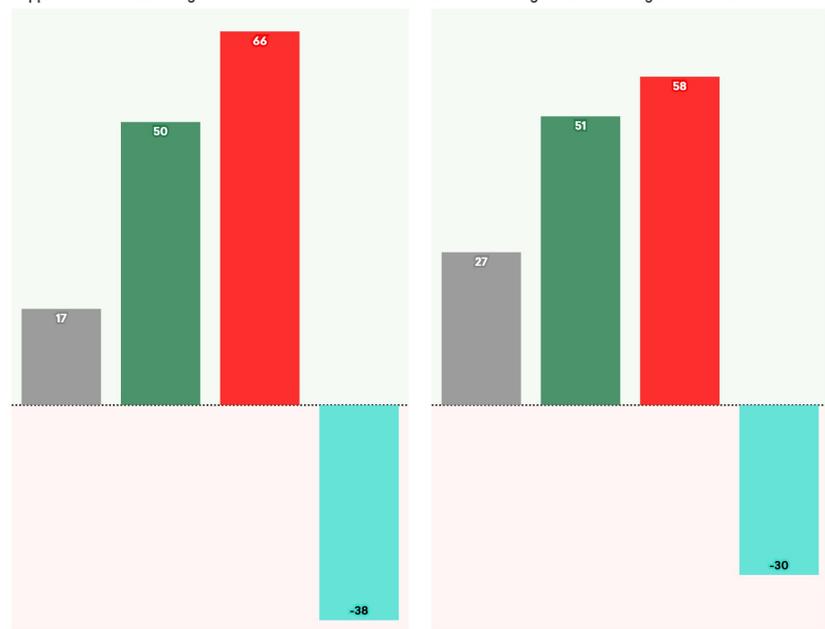
Net Zero is polarising in Wales

(Net support)

● All ● Plaid Cymru ● Labour ● Reform UK

Support for UK Net Zero target

Believe reaching Net Zero will be good for Wales



On the fundamentals of the climate debate, the energy transition is supported in Wales: three in five Welsh people say they are worried about climate change, and the Welsh public remain more likely to support (41 per cent) than oppose (26 per cent) the UK's Net Zero target.

However, much like in Scotland and England, Net Zero appears increasingly polarised in Wales. For many, this appears to be driven by a sense that the energy transition will not benefit Wales: Welsh Reform voters are three times more likely to say that reaching Net Zero will be bad for Wales than good for it.

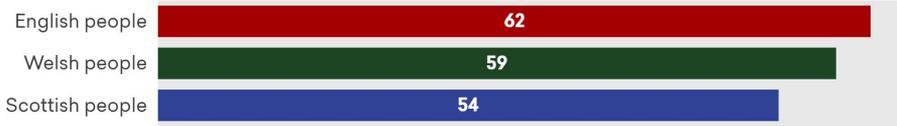
Plaid Cymru's decision to move away from the Net Zero by 2035 target - and focus on community ownership renewable policies that tangibly affect people may be a better way in to the climate debate.

Welsh voters share English concerns on migration – but see it as less of a priority

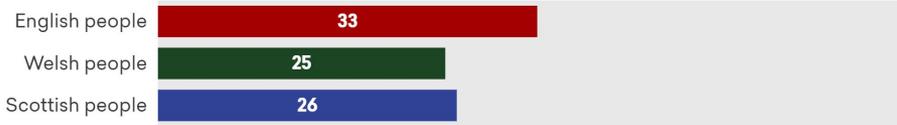
Majorities in England, Scotland and Wales say levels of immigration are too high - but the issue is more salient in England

(% in each nation who believe the following statements)

Government should reduce the number of immigrants accepted into the UK



Levels of immigration are a top issue facing the UK/Wales/Scotland



Channel crossings are a top issue facing the UK/Wales/Scotland



Wales is not distinct from England in attitudes toward migration, with three in five saying levels are too high.

However, the issue is less salient in Wales. Welsh voters are less likely than those in England to see immigration - or small boats - as top issues facing the country.

This gap also applies to Reform voters: 44 per cent of Welsh Reform voters say channel crossings are a top issue, compared to 64 per cent of English Reform voters.

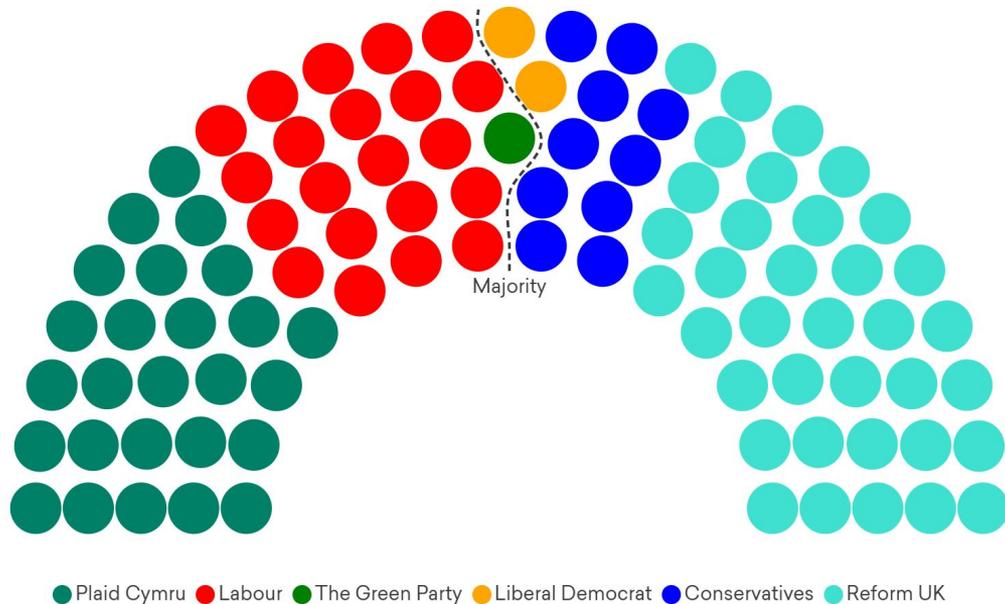


Plaid Cymru's changing support base

A Plaid Cymru government?

Senedd Seat Estimates

Based on current Senedd Voting Intention



More in Common's latest polling suggests that, if a Senedd election were held tomorrow, Plaid Cymru could provide the next First Minister - albeit short of the 49 seats needed for a majority.

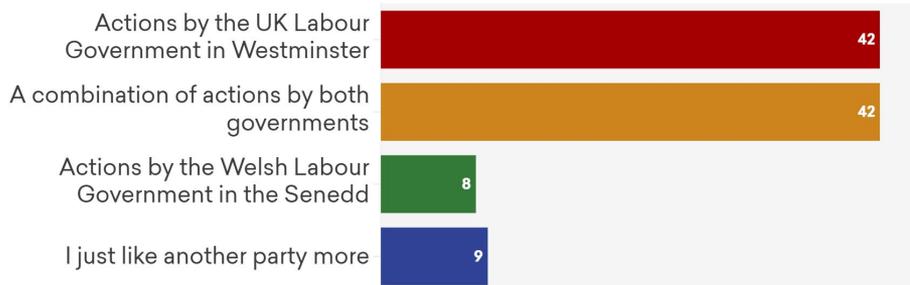
Reform UK, meanwhile, could emerge as the largest party in the Senedd and the official opposition.

On these numbers, Plaid Cymru may have to form a 'rainbow coalition' with an unpopular Welsh Labour Party, alongside the Greens or Liberal Democrats. In that scenario, the party would need to consider how it can project a sense of stability, and also retain its appeal as a vote for change.

The double-incumbency effect fuelling Plaid Cymru

Labour losses in Wales are being driven more by Westminster than by the Welsh Government

You said you voted for the Labour Party before, but would not vote for them in an election held today. Which of the following caused you to stop supporting the Labour Party?



Defections reflect both disillusionment with Welsh Labour and dissatisfaction with the UK Labour Government.

However, only 8 per cent of Labour's lost Welsh voters blame the Welsh Government alone. By contrast, 42 per cent point to Westminster, while a further 42 per cent cite a combination of both governments.

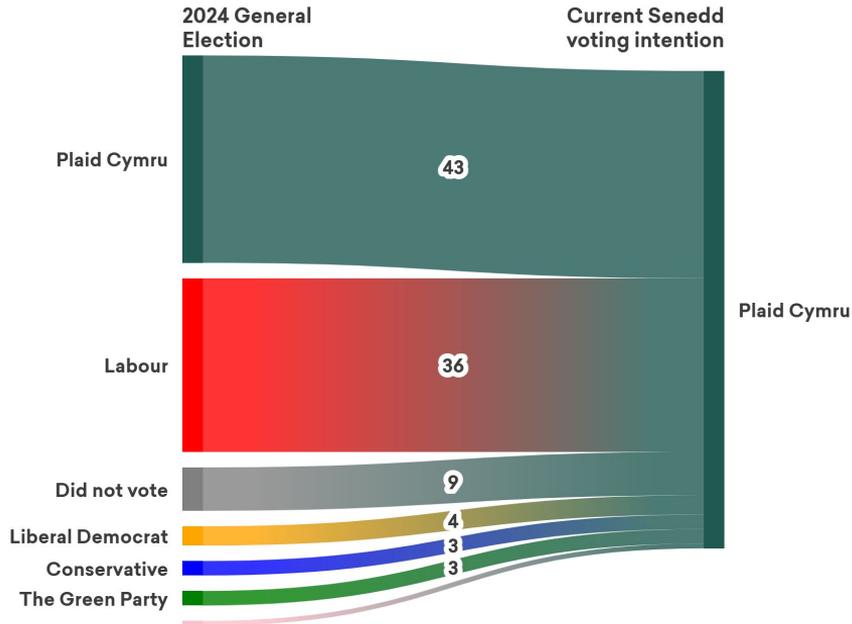
Criticism focused solely on the Welsh Government may not align with how voters attribute responsibility.

"I've been a lifelong Labour fan. But I never thought I'd see a Labour Government take money away from pensioners (...) I've never seen politics so adrift. I think they've totally lost touch with the people and I think politics is broken, which is leading to Britain and Wales being broken."

Martin, call centre manager, Labour voter

A lot has changed since 2024

More than a third of Plaid Cymru's supporters voted for Labour in the 2024 General Election



Fewer than half of those who intend to vote for Plaid Cymru in May also voted for the party in the 2024 General Election.

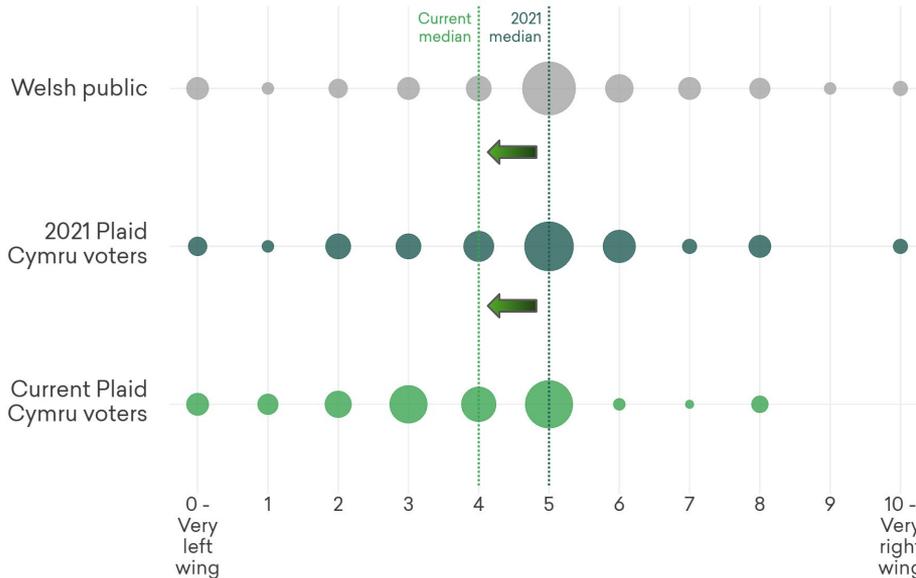
More than a third of Plaid supporters (36 per cent) voted Labour. Roughly a quarter voted Labour in the 2021 Senedd Election.

This has implications for Plaid Cymru's voter coalition in the run-up to the 2026 election.

Plaid Cymru's voter base is moving to the left

The average Plaid Cymru voter has moved to the left since 2021

Sometimes politics is described as being on a left-right scale. Where do you put your own views on that scale, where 0 is very left wing, and 10 is very right wing?



Since 2021, Plaid Cymru's voter base has moved further to the centre-left.

Much like the Green Party in England and Scotland, Plaid has become a key destination for disillusioned progressives in Wales.

Asked to rate themselves on a 10-point scale, where 0 is "very left-wing" and 10 is "very right-wing", the median Plaid Voter now places themselves at 4, whereas in 2021 the median Plaid voter placed themselves at 5.

Plaid Cymru's changing voter base

A growing proportion of Plaid Cymru voters are Progressive Activists

● Progressive Activists ● Incrementalist Left ● Established Liberals ● Sceptical Scrollers
● Rooted Patriots ● Traditional Conservatives ● Dissenting Disruptors



As progressive Welsh voters have abandoned Labour in favour of Plaid Cymru, the party's profile has changed dramatically.

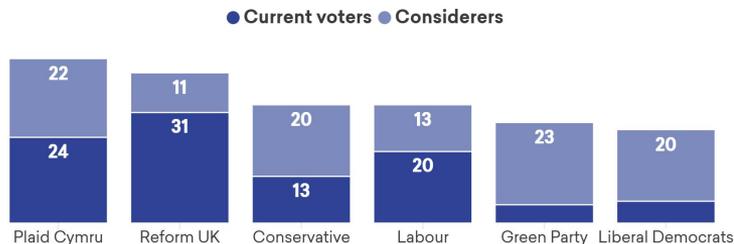
Progressive Activists and Incrementalist Left now form more than half (54 per cent) of Plaid Cymru's voter base - with Progressive Activists now forming 26 per cent of the party base.

Meanwhile, Plaid Cymru have shed many of their right-leaning voters - including Dissenting Disruptors - to Reform UK, who have emerged as the main anti-status-quo party in Wales.

Plaid Cymru has room to grow

Plaid Cymru may have the highest ceiling in Welsh politics

Respondents who they would vote for this party if there was a Senedd election tomorrow, alongside respondents who would 'consider' voting for this party...



Those considering voting for Plaid Cymru come from a range of segments

● Progressive Activists ● Incrementalist Left ● Established Liberals ● Sceptical Scrollers
● Rooted Patriots ● Traditional Conservatives ● Dissenting Disruptors

Current Plaid Cymru voters



Plaid Cymru 'considerers'



More in Common polling shows Plaid Cymru in second place behind Reform UK. However, the party may also have the greatest room for growth: alongside the 24 per cent of likely Welsh voters who currently support Plaid, a further 22 per cent say they would consider voting for them.

Plaid Cymru's appeal cuts across party lines, with 38 per cent of Labour voters and 11 per cent of Reform UK voters saying they would consider backing the party. A quarter of Plaid Cymru considerers are Dissenting Disruptors.

While this suggests Plaid Cymru has significant room to grow, converting these 'considerers' into supporters will be challenging, and will require Plaid to campaign on a policy agenda that appeals to a broad range of voters.

"I think (Plaid) are more invested in the Welsh people. I think as long as their policies were okay, I think maybe they'd be better for us than the bigger parties."

Melissa, physiotherapist, Bridgend



Is Welsh Politics at a Turning Point?



Friday, 27 February



12:50 - 13:50



Room 3B, Secure Zone,
ICC Wales



**Craig
Lawton (Chair)**

Senedd
Sources



**Louis
O'Geran**

More in
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**Lindsay
Whittle MS**

MS for
Caerphilly



**Delyth
Jewell MS**

Deputy Leader of
Plaid Cymru



**Dafydd
Trystan Davies**

Candidate for Caerdydd
Ffynnon Taf



**Heledd
Fychan MS**

Spokesperson for
Finance, Culture & Welsh
Language