

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Politics

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2026 Senedd Election (7 May 2026)

Result: Plaid Cymru won 43 seats (35.4% vote) — largest party but 6 short of majority (49 needed).

Final Seat Distribution

Party	Seats
Plaid Cymru	43
Reform UK	34
Welsh Labour	9
Conservatives	7
Green	3

- 96 total members (up from 60 — major reform)
- 6 parties represented; 4 official groups (5+ seats)
- Female members: 46% (44 of 96)
- New constituencies: 32 UK Parliament constituencies paired into 16 Senedd constituencies
- Voting system changed to proportional representation

Government Formation

- **8 May 2026:** Rhun ap Iorwerth confirmed Plaid Cymru would form a **minority government** (not coalition)

- **12 May 2026:** Ap Iorwerth elected First Minister by Senedd plenary vote — first non-Labour FM, ending 100+ years of Labour rule
 - **13 May 2026:** Cabinet appointed — "relentless focus on doing what's best for Wales"
 - Government operates cooperatively but without formal coalition agreement
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Seventh Senedd Committees (Confirmed 16 June 2026)

13 committees confirmed — one more than the Sixth Senedd:

- Plaid Cymru: 6 chairs
 - Reform UK: 5 chairs
 - Welsh Labour: 1 chair
 - Conservatives: 1 chair
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Key Political Developments (June 2026)

Steel Funding Row (17 June)

- Liz Saville Roberts grilled UK Government at Wales Questions over refusal to guarantee fair share of steel industry funding for Wales
- UK providing up to £2.5bn for UK steel industry plus £500m for Tata Steel Port Talbot
- Plaid Cymru demanding Wales gets equitable allocation

Starmer Meeting Cancelled

- BBC reported a promised June meeting between Keir Starmer and FM Rhun ap Iorwerth was called off
- Welsh government expressed disappointment

First Minister's Questions

- Third FMQs held 16 June 2026 — ap Iorwerth faced opposition leaders
- Also held 2 June 2026 (available on BBC iPlayer)

Senedd Reform Implementation

- First overseas visit: ap Iorwerth went to Dublin to build Ireland-Wales ties
- Equity union wrote to FM calling for culture/workforce commitments at heart of programme
- Senedd summer recess: 20 July – 13 September 2026

Reform UK MS Walkout (17–18 June)

- Reform MS Joe Martin (Caerdydd Penarth) sparked two days of controversy
- **Tuesday 16 June:** Martin claimed attacks from Sudanese asylum seekers were "inevitable" during FMQs on Nation of Sanctuary policy — Plaid accused him of racism
- **Wednesday 17 June:** In a debate on international spending, Martin joked Welsh students "couldn't read," mocked Ugandan tree-planting aid, and said Indian nurses taking Welsh jobs meant "the Welsh people who would have otherwise become nurses can instead go on universal credit"
- Plaid Cymru, Labour, and Greens walked out of the chamber
- Llywydd Huw Irranca-Davies rebuked Martin after the second speech but Plaid sources believed he should have acted sooner
- Reform chief whip Llŷr Powell told opponents to "get used to it"
- Plaid Trefnydd Heledd Fychan wrote to Llywydd seeking urgent ruling on Standing Orders breach

Supplementary Budget & Opposition Pressure (24–25 June)

- Finance Minister Elin Jones published £294m supplementary budget including £40m for school repairs
- Labour MS Huw Thomas said Plaid was taking opposition support "for granted"
- IFS analysis: budget set to cut health and social care in real terms
- Plaid acknowledged need for talks with opposition after initial reluctance

Senedd Hospital Vote Defeat (25 June)

- Opposition parties combined (Reform, Labour, Conservatives, Greens, Lib Dems) to pass motion 48–38
- Motion urged government to rule out hospital closures/downgrades for next 4 years
- Non-binding but first significant government defeat — highlights vulnerability of minority administration
- Health Minister Mabon ap Gwynfor: healthcare decisions "almost never black and white"

Automatic Voter Registration (24 June)

- Welsh government confirmed automatic voter registration for 2027 council elections

- Builds on Labour-era pilot in four council areas; aims to reduce ~400,000 unregistered voters

Wales Emissions Drop (24 June)

- 2024 emissions 8.6% lower than 2023; 44% reduction since 1990
- Main driver: closure of Port Talbot blast furnaces (was UK's biggest single CO2 source)

Glyndŵr University Name Row (25 June)

- Reform MS Cristiana Emsley (Fflint Wrecsam) called for Wrexham University to restore "Glyndŵr" to its name
- University dropped "Glyndŵr" in 2023, reportedly because it was perceived "too Welsh" or "difficult to pronounce"
- Plaid Culture Minister Heledd Fychan: "I can't think of any other country" where such a decision would be made
- Fychan said removing Glyndŵr's name "sent the wrong message about confidence and pride in Welsh identity"
- Emsley criticised Fychan for not opposing the change when it was first proposed; Fychan said she wasn't in government at the time

Welsh Conservatives — Hospice Funding (26 June)

- Welsh Conservatives called on Plaid Cymru to deliver fair, sustainable funding for Welsh hospices
- MS Natasha Asghar: rising pressure on staff and growing calls for sustainable funding model
- Highlights end-of-life care under funding pressure in the new Plaid-led Senedd

Starmer Resignation — Welsh Response (22 June)

- Keir Starmer announced resignation as PM, to remain until new Labour leader selected in September
- FM Rhun ap Iorwerth called for "new relationship" with Westminster — demands include more powers, fair funding, respect for Welsh democratic mandate
- Ap Iorwerth said Welsh government's ability to engage had been "hampered by turmoil in Westminster"
- Dismissed calls for a general election; Reform Welsh leader Dan Thomas demanded one

- Ap Iorwerth: successor must recognise Wales needs greater powers and "respect agenda must work both ways"
- Welsh Labour MPs Tonia Antoniazzi and Ruth Jones backed Starmer's decision; interim Welsh Labour leader Ken Skames praised him
- Context: Starmer's promised June meeting with FM never materialised; Plaid had demanded further powers/cash under Starmer with no delivery

Andy Burnham & Welsh Devolution (28 June)

- BBC Wales analysis: Burnham (expected next PM) has "more instinctive understanding of devolution than perhaps Keir Starmer did"
- In 2024 book *Head North*, Burnham proposed rewiring UK — devolving power from Westminster to regions
- But on Barnett formula reform, Burnham has already U-turned — spokesperson confirmed no plans to reform Wales funding formula
- Dr Ed Poole (Cardiff Uni): scrapping Barnett would take "many billions" out of Scottish budget — "Pandora's box" no new government would open
- Welsh Secretary Jo Stevens backing Burnham as next PM; critics accuse her of being anti-devolution
- FM ap Iorwerth: wants Burnham to have "understanding of devolution" and to "get powers right, get funding right"

Nursing & Midwifery Graduates Unemployment (28 June)

- Nearly 400 Welsh nursing and midwifery graduates remain without NHS jobs
- Comes after initial matching process finished without placing all graduates
- RCN Cymru had previously warned up to half of Welsh nursing graduates could face unemployment
- Adds pressure on new Plaid government over NHS workforce planning

BBC Budget Broadcast (28 June)

- BBC Parliament broadcast coverage of Finance Minister Elin Jones's supplementary budget statement (originally delivered 23 June)
- £294m supplementary budget under continued scrutiny; Labour MS Huw Thomas said Plaid taking opposition "for granted"

Wales Presses Case at Stormont Talks (29 June)

- Welsh Government Minister Dafydd Iwan Davies attended Stormont talks with UK and devolved governments
- Demanded new Wales Bill ensuring Wales has "same powers as Scotland"
- Called for replacing "out-dated funding formulas" and securing fair, needs-based funding settlement
- Middle East crisis driving cost of living pressures makes the case more urgent
- Focus also on collaborative working across UK governments on childcare and poverty

Guardian Analysis: Reform UK's First Weeks (28 June)

- Guardian deep-dive: Reform UK increased vote share from 1% (2021) to 29% (2026) — better than any Welsh Conservative result on record
- But support may plateau as it relies on socially conservative voters
- Pattern: tears, walkouts, own-goal votes in Senedd since entering as official opposition
- Reform Welsh leader Dan Thomas: party "operating within the rules" despite controversy

Burnham Rules Out Funding Reform (25 June)

- Andy Burnham (expected next PM) ruled out reforming Barnett formula for Wales funding
 - Contradicts 2024 book where he said it was time to "tear up" current arrangements
 - FM ap Iorwerth said it "was not a great start"
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Key Political Developments (July 2026)

Budget Standoff — Plaid Makes "Final Proposal" to Labour (12-13 July)

- **12 July:** BBC reports Ken Skates (interim Welsh Labour leader) says Labour will vote against supplementary budget unless ALN demands are met
- Plaid initially offered £80m over 2 years (£40m now, £40m next year) for Additional Learning Needs; Labour demanded £100m now
- Speaking on BBC Politics Wales, Skates called Plaid's offer a "bad deal for education"
- Deputy Minister Nerys Evans accused Labour of "playing politics" with extra money for NHS (£145m), childcare (£55m) and free school meals (£15m)
- Background: extra UK government ALN spending gave Welsh government a windfall; Plaid's budget also includes £100m for NHS waiting times and £40m for school repairs
- [BBC \(12 Jul\)](#)

- **13 July:** Plaid makes "final proposal" — FM Rhun ap Iorwerth writes to Labour interim leader Ken Skates offering **£120m over 3 years (£40m/year)** for ALN
- Ap Iorwerth's letter: "My Government is ready... investing £120m directly into ALN provision over the course of the next three years"
- Labour still holding out for £100m **this year** — offer falls short of their demand for immediate spending
- Ap Iorwerth warns Labour that £333m of in-year pressures face the Welsh NHS alone
- Supplementary budget has £247m of day-to-day spending currently unallocated
- Wales Governance Centre (Cardiff Uni) analysis: even if all unallocated cash went to NHS, it'd be less than half the historic annual average increase
- Labour group discusses latest offer before deciding position; Huw Thomas says offer "not enough"
- Senior Labour source: "From offering zero for ALN a week ago, Plaid are offering jam tomorrow and beyond, but we need £100m now"
- Reform and Welsh Conservatives expected to vote against — no deal discussions with them
- If budget falls, Plaid could return with amended offer in summer recess or autumn
- **14 July:** Vote scheduled for Tuesday evening — crucial test for Plaid minority government
- [BBC — "Final proposal" \(13 Jul\)](#)
- [WalesOnline — Last-minute offer \(13 Jul\)](#)

Supplementary Budget DEFEATED — Plaid's First Major Defeat (14 July)

- Welsh Government's first supplementary budget (£294m/£433m package) defeated **49-44** — only the two Green MSs backed Plaid
- **Vote:** 49 against, 44 for, 0 abstentions
- Labour withdrew support after NAHT Cymru and ASCL Cymru teaching unions declared a trade dispute over the 3.5% pay deal and ALN funding crisis
- Plaid had offered Labour £120m over 3 years (£40m/year) for ALN; Labour held out for £100m **this year**
- Ken Skates (interim Welsh Labour leader) asked Plaid to withdraw the budget entirely; Plaid refused, wanting Labour's position on public record
- Finance Minister Elin Jones said she was "flabbergasted" by Labour's stance, accusing them of abandoning "progressive co-operative" values and voting with right-wing parties
- Skates interjected during Jones's speech in the chamber to say her comments were "beneath you"
- Plaid made clear that if budget failed, ALN funding would NOT be included in any future supplementary budget — Labour's Lynne Neagle called this "an act of supreme spite" and "vindictive"
- Conservatives' Darren Millar called it "bonkers" to bring budget to vote without securing support

- Reform UK's Cai Parry-Jones said budget failed three "red lines": ending overseas spending, protecting NHS jobs, adequate ALN funding
- Lib Dem Jane Dodds voted against over Powys hospital bed cuts and cross-border healthcare delays
- Annual budget approved in January remains in force; Finance Minister will bring back revised supplementary budget in autumn
- Elin Jones written statement confirmed £145m NHS, £55m childcare, £15m free school meals, £8m bus fare pilot, £20m social housing, £40m school maintenance now blocked
- Reform leader Dan Thomas: "Plaid Cymru cannot govern this country. Rhun ap Iorwerth's government has now lost the confidence of this Senedd on his own budget"
- First significant defeat for Plaid minority government since May election; government heads into summer recess without supplementary spending authority
- [BBC — Budget defeat \(14 Jul\)](#)
- [Nation.Cymru \(14 Jul\)](#)
- [WalesOnline Live \(14 Jul\)](#)
- [GOV.WALES Written Statement \(14 Jul\)](#)

First Legislative Programme — Phase 1 Announced (14 July)

- FM Rhun ap Iorwerth unveiled first wave of legislation in a Senedd statement:
 - **Tenants' Rights Bill:** strengthen rights for private renters, fairer rents, limit no-fault evictions — "the value my government places on fairness has motivated us to take action"
 - **Community Right to Buy Bill:** community groups can nominate and register valuable local assets (pubs, buildings, land) for first refusal when owners decide to sell
 - **Rural Proofing Bill:** ministers must consider the impact of policies on rural communities when developing legislation
 - **Right to Adequate Housing:** proposals being developed for future legislation — "nobody should be forced to suffer the anxiety and unacceptable stigma which so often comes with having nowhere to call home"
- Described by ap Iorwerth as "the first stage of a wider legislative programme" reflecting "our core values as a government, for the benefit of all the communities of Wales" ||- [GOV.WALES — Written Statement: Budget outcome \(14 Jul\)](#) ||- [Nation.Cymru — Legislative programme \(14 Jul\)](#) ||- [Morning Star — Wales in brief \(14 Jul\)](#) ||- [BBC — Skates appointed permanent Welsh Labour leader \(15 Jul\)](#) ||- [BBC — FM promises cooperation after budget defeat \(15 Jul\)](#) ||- [BBC — Shadow Broadcasting Authority unveiled \(15 Jul\)](#) ||- [BBC — Reform calls for badger cull \(15 Jul\)](#)

Other Developments (14 July)

|- **Social Housing Target:** Housing Minister Sian Gwenllian committed to 20,000 additional social homes by 2030, working with local authorities and registered social landlords — delivery period runs until March 2030; homes limited to social rent and rent where affordability secured in perpetuity |- **Fire Service Intervention:** Welsh Government continued Labour-era intervention in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service after report exposed widespread bullying, harassment, discrimination and favouritism in promotions; four government-appointed commissioners remain in place until after 2027 local elections |- **Health Visitors Strike:** Striking Unite Wales health visitors from Cwm Taf health board continued 21-week strike outside Senedd, handed petition to Health Minister Mabon ap Gwynfor demanding he fulfil election promises to resolve dispute; ballot confirmed strike action for further 12 months |- **Palestinian Solidarity:** Campaigners held a mass die-in protest outside the Senedd |- [Morning Star \(14 Jul\)](#)

Ken Skates Appointed Permanent Welsh Labour Leader (15 July)

|- Ken Skates formally appointed Welsh Labour leader after all nine Labour MSs nominated him, confirming his appointment |- Skates held interim role since May's Senedd election which left Labour with only 9 MSs |- Said he was "deeply honoured" to have unanimous backing; described Labour as "a movement for fairness, justice, security and liberty" |- Appointment confirmed the day after Plaid's supplementary budget defeated — Skates said minority governments must build consensus not "attack, attack, attack" |- Deputy leader Carolyn Harris MP offered congratulations; process brought forward to align with UK Labour leadership timetable |- [BBC \(15 Jul\)](#)

FM Promises Cooperation After Budget Defeat (15 July)

|- First Minister Rhun ap Iorwerth promised an "even more cooperative" approach to opposition parties after the bruising 14 July budget defeat |- Accused Labour of "joining forces with Reform UK" to vote down spending plans but committed to working "in the spirit of cooperation" |- Pledged to bring forward another supplementary budget alongside next year's full annual budget after summer recess |- Said Labour had acted "irresponsibly" by helping defeat the budget: "They have to explain it, but we move forward now" |- Confirmed securing a budget was "one of the founding pillars" of the Senedd's political cycle |- [BBC \(15 Jul\)](#)

Welsh Government Unveils 'First Step' Towards Broadcasting Powers (15 July)

| - Welsh government establishing a "Shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority" — described as first step towards seeking devolved broadcasting powers | - Culture Minister Heledd Fychan said a UK-wide framework "does not cater to the realities of how a devolved UK operates" | - Aim is to "protect and strengthen" Wales' media landscape; authority will "use every lever available" | - Fychan said UK Government's Local Media Fund "is the latest example of plans agreed for and about us, where we have no role" | - Reform said Plaid should focus on health and education; Conservatives accused Welsh government of wasting time and taxpayers' money | - [BBC \(15 Jul\)](#)

Reform Calls for Badger Cull in Bovine TB Fight (15 July)

| - Reform UK rural affairs spokesperson Laura Anne Jones urged Welsh government to consider a badger cull as part of efforts to eradicate TB in cattle | - Welsh government currently bans badger culling, favouring vaccination and other measures | - Jones said "difficult decisions" needed to tackle one of the biggest challenges facing farming communities | - Labour's Vikki Howells rejected calls, arguing insufficient scientific evidence to justify policy change | - Rural affairs minister Llyr Gruffydd said he would wait for recommendations from expert advisory group before considering any change | - England recently ended its badger culling policy, moving towards vaccinating badgers instead | - [BBC \(15 Jul\)](#)

Council By-Elections — Detailed Results (9-10 July)

- Nation.Cymru (Martin Shipton) detailed analysis of 9 July by-elections, suggesting Reform UK's allure is waning
- **Baruc (Barry):** Plaid Cymru HOLD — Shirley Hodges 856 votes (47.7%), Reform 429 (23.9%), Conservatives 219 (12.2%). Plaid vote up 11.2pp since 2022, Conservative vote down 8.2pp despite Andrew RT Davies targeting the ward
- **Trebanos (Neath Port Talbot):** Plaid Cymru HOLD — Jamie Watkins 223 (51%), Reform 88 (20%)
- **Llanrug (Gwynedd):** Plaid LOST — Independent Rhys Parry (centre-right Welsh nationalist) won with 394 votes (57.4%); Plaid 262 (38.2%)
- **Splott (Cardiff):** Labour HOLD — James Caruana 765 (40%), Green 678 (36%), Reform 286 (15%). Plaid did not field a candidate
- **Flintshire (Lib Dem-held):** Lib Dem HOLD — Faron Hadfield-Jones 614 (39.8%), Reform 490 (31.7%)
- **Connah's Quay Central (Flintshire):** Reform UK WIN — Dave Vernon 256 (48.1%), Labour 101 (19%)
- Nation.Cymru analysis: Reform still winning seats but performance plateauing; Plaid holding its ground in heartlands

- [Nation.Cymru \(10 Jul\)](#)

Media Fund Row — Welsh Government Bypassed (10 July)

- Martin Shipton (Nation.Cymru) reports Welsh Government told only on 1 July (6 days before launch) about UK Government's £12m Local News Fund for outlets in England and Wales
- DCMS set up Local News Fund Steering Board of 8 members — none from Wales
- Welsh Government says it was "informed, not consulted"; DCMS claims broadcasting is a reserved matter
- Wales Office accused Nation.Cymru of "unwarranted criticism" after the story; Nation.Cymru pushed back on distinction between "informed" and "consulted"
- Welsh Government has its own long-running media support programme under economic development powers
- [Nation.Cymru \(10 Jul\)](#)

Reform UK Leader Dan Thomas Property Portfolio (7 July)

- Senedd Register of Members' Interests (published 6 July) reveals Dan Thomas and his wife jointly own:
 - 4 rental properties in England (2 in London, 1 Oxfordshire, 1 Somerset)
 - A holiday home with 4 acres in Sardinia, "occasionally rented out"
 - Shares in Lloyds Banking Group, Legal & General, and BAE Systems
- Thomas is not a registered landlord (unlike Wales where Rent Smart Wales requires registration)
- Nation.Cymru sent detailed questions about his residency and property history — none answered directly
- ITV Cymru Wales later shown a letter from Caerphilly council confirming Thomas registered to a Caerphilly address
- [Nation.Cymru \(7 Jul\)](#)
- [WalesOnline \(7 Jul\)](#)

Rhodri Morgan Statue Unveiled (9 July)

- Bronze statue of former First Minister Rhodri Morgan (Wales's first FM, served 2000–2009) unveiled in Cardiff Bay in front of Pierhead Building
- Depicts Morgan in casual clothes alongside his dog Tel — "unstuffy" approach to politics
- Designed by sculptor Andy Edwards (also created Beatles statue in Liverpool)

- Finance Minister Elin Jones, former FM Mark Drakeford, Julie Morgan, Llywydd Huw Irranca-Davies attended
- Described as "father of devolution" by Drakeford; result of 8 years of fundraising
- [BBC \(9 Jul\)](#)

Planning System Overhaul Needed for Housing (11-12 July)

- House builders and housing associations call for planning system "overhaul" to meet Plaid's target of 20,000 social homes by 2030
- Only 5,159 homes completed last year vs target of 8,700/year needed
- Beacon Cymru CEO: planning applications taking 3-5 years, need reducing to 1-2 years
- Housing grant per home rose 75% from £93k to £163k in 4 years (Audit Wales)
- Housing minister Sian Gwenllian promises new national agency "Unnos" to assist with planning
- Welsh government says target backed by additional £20m in supplementary budget
- [BBC \(11 Jul\)](#)

Starmmer Defence Plans — Welsh Budget Cuts (30 June–1 July)

- FM ap Iorwerth wrote to Welsh Secretary Jo Stevens saying Welsh capital budgets face cuts this year and future years to fund Starmmer's £15bn Defence Investment Plan
- Ap Iorwerth: "deeply concerned" schools, hospitals, infrastructure in Wales "could miss out on vital funding"
- Says he first heard about cuts in the media — no advance warning of scale
- **Specific figures emerge (1 July):** Welsh govt estimates £25m-£30m cut to capital budget this year (0.8% of £3.7bn capital budget), with further cuts expected up to April 2030. UK govt says changes would be "minor"; Welsh Labour source calls it "minuscule"
- Only £29,000 left unallocated in capital budget under current plans; Finance Minister has access to £50m reserve
- Welsh govt warns cuts have "direct impact for schools, hospitals and transport", noting further £4.7bn to be found at autumn budget
- A Welsh Labour source called Plaid's response "disappointing but not surprising" and accused them of playing "fast and loose with national security"
- Finance Minister Elin Jones attended meeting with Treasury/MoD where defence plans were discussed; Plaid source says she was "surprised that no figures were shared"
- Links to supplementary budget vote on 14 July — Plaid needs Labour or Tory support to pass it

Nation of Sanctuary Debate — Reform Defeated (1 July)

- Reform Welsh leader Dan Thomas tabled motion calling for Nation of Sanctuary policy to be scrapped, calling it "an open invitation" and claiming it "puts illegal arrivals ahead of the queue"
- Motion defeated 52-38 — Plaid, Labour, Greens, Lib Dems voted against
- Plaid Deputy FM Sioned Williams accused Reform of being "historically illiterate"
- Labour MS Shav Taj: "That isn't evidence, that's scapegoating"
- Debate was heated but no repeat of Joe Martin walkout drama from June
- Between 2019-2025 Welsh govt spent £63m (0.05% of budget) on the policy, mostly on Ukrainian refugees

Senedd ALN Vote — Plaid Loses Again (2 July)

- Plaid Cymru government lost another Senedd vote — Labour motion calling for more funding for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) passed 46-41
- Second government defeat in a row, following hospital closures vote the previous week
- Plaid Finance Minister Elin Jones accused Labour, Reform and Tories of forming a "grand alliance" of "right-left-right"
- Labour's Lynne Neagle: "Nearly a third of schools are in budget deficit"
- Reform's Cai Parry-Jones: "Plaid has one-upped Starmer's Labour by going after disabled children"
- Greens and Lib Dems abstained
- Key context: Plaid's supplementary budget vote on 14 July — talks with Labour described as "far apart"

Conservatives Rule Out Budget Deal with Plaid (1 July)

- Welsh Conservatives ruled out a deal with Plaid Cymru ministers for the first big budget test on 14 July
- Source: linked in BBC articles on defence cuts and ALN vote

Reform & Tories in Culture Wars / Trans Row at FMQs (30 June)

- Morning Star reports Reform and Conservatives "outbidding each other" on culture war issues at FMQs
- Debate included questions on trans rights and biological definition of a woman

- FM Rhun ap Iorwerth urged MSs to "cool down the temperature" on "what has become a heated debate but also a very painful debate for many individuals"
- WalesOnline: ap Iorwerth asked directly about biological definition of a woman, called for cooler debate
- Reflects ongoing tension in the expanded Senedd between Plaid minority government and opposition

Sex Education Inconsistency — Watchdog Report (2 July)

- Welsh education watchdog (Estyn) finds sexuality and gender teaching in Welsh schools is "inconsistent"
- Estyn report flags variation in how schools deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Adds to pressure on Plaid government over education policy

Labour MS Calls for Rabbit Owner Training (2 July)

- Labour MS Mike Hedges proposed mandatory short training courses before rabbit ownership
- Dubbed "hare-brained" by a Conservative MS; RSPCA backed improved welfare understanding
- Minor story reflecting Senedd backbench activity

Council By-Election Results (2 July)

- By-elections held in Powys and Torfaen:
- **Powys Glantwymyn:** Plaid Cymru HOLD (513 votes, 35% turnout) — Reform UK got 63
- **Powys Yscir:** Liberal Democrat WIN from Reform UK (297 vs 259, 51% turnout)
- **Powys Llanyre:** Reform UK HOLD (359, 50% turnout)
- **Torfaen Llantarnam:** Reform UK HOLD (505, 22% turnout)
- Posted on r/Wales by user Former-Variation-441

GB News / Cymru Name Petition Row (3-4 July)

- Petition calling for Wales to be officially known as Cymru (not "banning" Wales, as GB News claimed) went viral
- GB News published article headlined "Union Jacks torn down in Welsh town amid calls to BAN 'Wales' as country's official name" — misrepresenting petition as seeking to "ban" the name Wales

- Petition creator John Price told Nation.Cymru: "No one is calling to 'ban' the term Wales"
- Reform MS Iain McIntosh asked FM Rhun ap Iorwerth to "condemn such actions" and confirm Welsh Government support for "established national identity"
- Follows earlier petition with 10,000 signatures not taken forward by previous Welsh Labour government

Press Regulator Rejects Reform MS Complaint (3 July)

- Reform MS Cai Parry-Jones (Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf) complained to IPSO that Nation.Cymru article on his autism-friendly signage backlash was inaccurate
- IPSO rejected complaint: did not consider article "significantly inaccurate", noting Nation.Cymru had set out Parry-Jones's position in full
- Parry-Jones had threatened legal action when Nation.Cymru approached him for comment — then complained about them reporting that threat
- IPSO noted his email said he would "reserve all rights, including any legal remedies available to me"
- Parry-Jones chose not to appeal the decision
- Story also notes Reform in Senedd has strengthened calls for Nation.Cymru to be defunded

Fuel Poverty & Plaid's Ynni Cymru Energy Plans (5 July)

- Nation.Cymru opinion piece by Tegid Roberts: 340,000 Welsh households (1 in 4) in fuel poverty; 63,000 in severe fuel poverty
- Wales produces more energy than it consumes but households struggle to heat homes
- Cadarn report updates 2017 case for Ynni Cymru — a national publicly-owned energy company for Wales
- Current Ynni Cymru programme (grants, local projects) is "a valuable start" but "not the destination"
- Report argues Plaid now has the political power to deliver the full version: bulk energy purchasing, mass solar/battery rollout, industrial energy strategy

Burnham Offers Fresh Start for Wales (5-6 July)

- Welsh Government Minister Dafydd Iwan tells BBC Politics Wales there's a "real opportunity" to work in partnership if Burnham becomes PM
- Davies cautious: not sure "Team Burnham" know their position on Welsh devolution vs Scottish
- Burnham's spokesperson: "Andy has spent his whole political career fighting for the nations and regions — he will put Wales at the centre of any government he runs"

- Error-filled Burnham opinion piece in WalesOnline raised questions about team's grasp of Welsh devolution
- **BBC article (6 July):** WalesOnline revealed Burnham's team offered a "Welshified" copy of articles also given to The Scotsman and London Standard — same sentences with Welsh place names swapped in
- Plaid MS Carrie Harper called it a "copy and paste opinion piece"; said Burnham "talks a good talk but his lazy opinion piece proves his understanding stops at Offa's Dyke"
- On BBC Radio Wales Sunday Supplement, interim Welsh Labour leader Ken Skates said risk of Burnham bypassing Senedd to devolve directly to councils was "nonexistent"
- Plaid minister Dafydd Iwan said bypassing Senedd would show "no respect whatsoever"
- Follows Starmer resignation and failure of promised June FM meeting with Starmer

Plaid Offers ALN Deal in Budget Bid (8 July)

- Plaid Cymru made an initial offer to Welsh Labour on additional learning needs (ALN) provision in an effort to secure budget support ahead of 14 July supplementary budget vote
- Labour indicated the offer was insufficient; negotiations ongoing
- r/Wales discussion noted worries about government stability if budget can't pass
- **Context:** Plaid needs Labour or Conservative support to pass the supplementary budget; Tories have already ruled out a deal; Labour talks described as "far apart" previously

Child Poverty Payment Faces Legal Hurdles (9 July)

- BBC reports Plaid Cymru government's proposed trial giving £10/week to poorest parents of children under six faces "substantial practical issues"
- Legal expert Prof Emyr Lewis (Aberystwyth University) says payments would likely be treated as regular income, triggering deductions from Universal Credit and other benefits
- Welsh government has no powers over welfare; would need UK government cooperation to avoid benefit impact
- UK government approached for comment; Plaid's pilot would target 15,000 children in households receiving Universal Credit
- By Elli W. Gwawr, BBC Wales political correspondent

FM Ap Iorwerth: "Devolution Must Not Stop at Offa's Dyke" (9 July)

- FM Rhun Iir Iorwerth published opinion piece in Nation.Cymru titled "Burnham must ensure devolution does not stop at Offa's Dyke"

- Argues Wales remains "a footnote in the UK's political story" despite 30 years of devolution and historic Plaid election victory
- Calls for parity with Scotland on powers (justice, policing, Crown Estates, rail) and needs-based funding reform
- Warns against "Manchesterism" — Burnham's Northern Powerhouse approach risks pitting regions against each other while bypassing Senedd
- Urges Burnham to empower Senedd, not bypass it: "If Andy Burnham is to demonstrate his full commitment to subsidiarity, then our Senedd must be empowered, not bypassed"
- Direct pitch to incoming PM as Starmer's successor is chosen

Plaid Peer Appointed to Two Taxpayer-Funded Senedd Roles (9 July)

- Nation.Cymru reports Baroness Carmen Smith (Baroness Smith of Llanfaes), the House of Lords' youngest ever life peer (28), has been appointed to two Senedd support staff positions
- Roles: policy and research officer for Fflint Wreccsam MS Carrie Harper; senior adviser to Afan Ogwr Rhondda MS Elyn Stephens
- Both roles funded by Senedd Commission (Welsh taxpayers); salary not disclosed
- Smith has previously called for House of Lords abolition and presented a Private Member's Bill on the subject
- Welsh Labour source called it "hypocritical" — "not content with one publicly funded job, but feels the need to have three"
- Plaid spokesperson said she has "wealth of experience to offer" and works "a combination of short number days per month"

Strike Ballots Threaten Welsh Council Disruption (9 July)

- Unison members in Wrexham and Flintshire ballot for strike action over 3.3% pay offer for 2026/27
- Bin workers, teachers, housing officers, social workers among those balloting
- Ballot also covers Swansea Council, Blaenau Gwent, and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Four-week ballot closes 6 August; strikes could begin in autumn
- Unions say council staff pay down ~26% in real terms since 2010
- Separate dispute ongoing over Wrexham Council hybrid working policy imposed against staff wishes

Ken Skates Likely Next Welsh Labour Leader (9 July)

- Welsh Labour suddenly brought forward leadership contest to replace Eluned Morgan
- Ken Skates (Fflint Wrecsam MS, interim leader since May election) expected to be unopposed
- Nominations open 7 days from 9 July for Labour's 9 MSs; process aligned with UK Labour leadership timetable
- Skates: wants to "build a new movement from the community up"
- Huw Thomas (Cardiff Penarth) ruled himself out, giving Skates "full support"
- Lynne Neagle, Mike Hedges, Shav Taj also confirmed backing Skates
- Senior party source says group is "united" and "cohesive"; no other candidates expected
- Original plan was Sept nominations with new leader at Nov conference — brought forward to avoid summer speculation
- [BBC \(9 Jul\)](#)

Welsh Rail Devolution Claims Disputed (9 July)

- Welsh government claimed it had begun "negotiations with UK government for fairer funding and a pathway to full devolution" of rail
- UK Labour source close to Westminster transport department says press release "massively overegged" — no formal request received
- Deputy Transport Minister Mark Hooper had face-to-face meeting with UK Transport Minister Lord Hendy described as an "introduction"
- Hooper said UK minister told him to "be ready with projects" to approach Treasury for funding
- Welsh government had nothing to add beyond the press release
- Context: Wales has ~10% of UK rail track length but has received only 1.5% of enhancements investment over 15 years
- [BBC \(9 Jul\)](#)

FM Attends British-Irish Council, Budget Standoff Continues (10 July)

- FM Rhun ap Iorwerth attended British-Irish Council summit in Guernsey — his first meeting with a UK government minister
- Burnham published fresh WalesOnline opinion piece promising to work "constructively with the minority Plaid Cymru administration"
- Burnham: "My promise to Wales is straightforward — I'll respect the devolution settlement"
- Ap Iorwerth called on Burnham to empower, not bypass, the Senedd
- **Budget standoff:** Plaid offered £80m over 2 years for ALN (£40m now, £40m next year); Labour holding out for £100m in this supplementary budget alone
- Labour finance spokesperson Huw Thomas: party will oppose budget "as it stands"

- Ap Iorwerth (at BIC): "It's Labour's call now" — says Labour should "reflect on why they would want to disappoint parents and local authorities"
- Supplementary budget vote scheduled for Tuesday 14 July — crucial test for Plaid minority government
- If budget fails, Plaid can bring a revised version back in the autumn
- [BBC \(10 Jul\)](#)
- [BBC — Burnham told not to bypass Senedd \(9-10 Jul\)](#)

Reform's Dan Thomas on Criminal Donations (7 July)

- Reform Welsh leader Dan Thomas says he "would consider a donation from a criminal for security" if it was his "only option"
- Comments raise further questions about Reform's approach to funding and governance in their role as official opposition
- [BBC \(7 Jul\)](#)

Key Figures

Role	Name	Party
First Minister	Rhun ap Iorwerth	Plaid Cymru
Senedd Llywydd (Presiding Officer)	—	—
Reform UK Group Leader	—	Reform UK

Timeline

- **7 May 2026:** Election day
- **8 May:** Plaid confirms minority government plan
- **12 May:** Ap Iorwerth sworn in as FM
- **13 May:** Cabinet appointed
- **16 June:** 13 Senedd committees confirmed for Seventh Senedd
- **16 June:** Third FMQs; Reform MS Joe Martin's "inevitable attack" comments on Sudanese asylum seekers
- **17 June:** Steel funding row at Wales Questions; Reform MS walkout after Martin's second controversial speech

- **22 June:** Keir Starmer resigns as PM; FM ap Iorwerth calls for "new relationship" with Westminster; dismisses general election calls
- **24 June:** Supplementary budget published; automatic voter registration confirmed; emissions data released
- **25 June:** Senedd hospital vote defeat (48–38); Burnham rules out Barnett reform; Glyndŵr university name row
- **26 June:** Welsh Conservatives call for fair hospice funding under Plaid government
- **27 June:** BBC Parliament broadcast coverage of Senedd plenary debate
- **28 June:** BBC Wales analysis of Burnham's devolution stance; BBC broadcasts supplementary budget statement coverage; BBC Wales reports ~400 nursing/midwifery graduates still without NHS jobs; Guardian publishes deep-dive on Reform UK's dramatic first weeks in Senedd (1%→29% vote share)
- **29 June:** Wales presses case for new powers and fair funding at Stormont talks — Minister demands new Wales Bill with "same powers as Scotland"; Plenary committees meet; Ex-Welsh Tory MP Craig Williams pleads guilty to election date betting charges; co-defendants include former Senedd member Russell George
- **30 June:** Business Committee meets 09:00; Plenary session 13:30 (Topical Questions, Government Business); BBC publishes article on Starmer defence plans cutting Welsh budget; Morning Star reports Reform/Tories "outbidding each other" on culture wars/trans issues at FMQs — ap Iorwerth calls for "cool down"
- **1 July:** Nation of Sanctuary debate — Reform motion to scrap defeated 52–38; Welsh Conservatives rule out budget deal with Plaid; Welsh govt estimates £25m–£30m capital budget cut for defence spending
- **2 July:** Plaid loses ALN vote in Senedd 46–41 — second government defeat in a row; Plaid survives childcare vote with Tory help; Estyn report finds sex/relationships education "inconsistent" in Welsh schools; Labour MS Mike Hedges proposes rabbit owner training courses; council by-elections in Powys & Torfaen — Plaid hold Glantwymyn, Lib Dems win Yscir from Reform, Reform hold Llanyre & Llantarnam
- **3 July:** Press regulator IPSO rejects Reform MS Cai Parry-Jones's complaint against Nation.Cymru over autism signage article; Reform strengthens calls to defund Nation.Cymru
- **3-4 July:** GB News misrepresents Cymru name petition as seeking to "ban" Wales; Reform MS Iain McIntosh asks FM to condemn; petition creator hits back
- **5 July:** Nation.Cymru publishes Cadarn report analysis on fuel poverty — 340,000 households affected; renewed calls for full Ynni Cymru national energy company; WalesOnline publishes Burnham fresh start interview with Dafydd Iwan Davies; Reform UK profile of Jason O'Connell published
- **6 July:** BBC reports Burnham team offered WalesOnline a "Welshified" copy-paste opinion piece also sent to Scotland and London — Plaid MS Carrie Harper calls it "lazy"; Ken Skates says Burnham bypassing Senedd risk "nonexistent"
- **7 July:** Reform Welsh leader Dan Thomas says he "would consider a donation from a criminal for security" if it was his "only option"
- **8 July:** Plaid Cymru makes initial ALN offer to Labour in bid to secure support for 14 July supplementary budget vote; Labour says offer insufficient
- **9 July:** BBC reports Plaid's £10/week child poverty payment trial faces legal hurdles; FM ap Iorwerth publishes Nation.Cymru opinion piece calling on Burnham to ensure

devolution "does not stop at Offa's Dyke"; Plaid peer Baroness Carmen Smith appointed to two taxpayer-funded Senedd roles; Unison ballots for strikes over 3.3% pay offer; Ken Skates likely next Welsh Labour leader; Welsh govt rail devolution claims disputed

- **10 July:** FM ap Iorwerth attends British-Irish Council summit in Guernsey — first meeting with UK government minister; Budget standoff: Plaid offers £80m/2yr for ALN, Labour wants £100m now; ap Iorwerth says "It's Labour's call"; Burnham pledges to work "constructively" with Plaid admin
 - **13 July:** Plaid makes "final proposal" — FM ap Iorwerth offers Labour £120m over 3 years for ALN; Labour still demanding £100m now | - **14 July:** Supplementary budget DEFEATED 49–44 after Labour withdraws support over ALN/teaching union dispute; First Legislative Programme unveiled (tenants' rights, community right to buy, rural proofing); Housing Minister commits to 20,000 social homes by 2030; SWFRS intervention continues; Cwm Taf health visitors strike enters 21st week | - **15 July:** Ken Skates formally appointed permanent Welsh Labour leader — all nine MSs nominated him; FM ap Iorwerth promises "even more cooperative" approach after budget defeat, will bring revised supplementary budget in autumn; Welsh government unveils "Shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority" as first step towards broadcasting powers; Reform calls for badger cull in bovine TB fight rejected by Labour | - **20 July - 13 Sep:** Summer recess
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- [Burnham 'error-filled' article about devolution — BBC \(6 Jul\)](#)
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