

Welsh Independence — Public Opinion & Debate Tracker

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Last updated: 27 May 2026 — no major new independence developments since 26 May. Senedd is in Whitsun recess.

Context

Welsh independence (annibyniaeth i Gymru) has become a live political issue since Plaid Cymru won the most seats in the May 2026 Senedd election and formed a minority government under First Minister **Rhun ap Iorwerth**. Plaid is the first non-Labour party to lead Wales.

While the party has ruled out a referendum in this Senedd term, it has committed to "making the case" for independence through government, including a commissioned White Paper.

Latest Polling

Poll	Date	Yes	No	Don't Know	Notes
YouGov	Jan 2026	26%	54%	20%	1,220 adults; only 1% listed independence as top UK Govt priority
YouGov/BBC	~Apr 2026	32%	52%	16%	Only 56% of Plaid voters backed independence

Poll	Date	Yes	No	Don't Know	Notes
Redfield & Wilton / YesCymru	Mar-Apr 2025	35%	50%	14%	41% Yes excl. DKs; "milestone" — 72% of 25-34 year olds backed independence
Redfield & Wilton	Jul 2023	32%	58%	10%	53% of 18-24 year olds backed Yes

Trend: Support has been on a slow upward trajectory, with the Redfield & Wilton/YesCymru poll (35%, 41% excl. DKs) described as a "milestone moment" by YesCymru Chair Phyl Griffiths. The most significant shift is generational — 72% of 25-34 year olds support independence.

Party Positions

Party	Position	Detail
Plaid Cymru	☒ For	"Our nation is on a journey to independence." No referendum this term. Will request devolution of indyref power. £500k White Paper commissioned.
Welsh Labour	☐ Against	"A strong Wales in a strong United Kingdom." Wants Constitutional Reform Act to protect devolution.
Welsh Conservatives	☐ Against	Calls independence a "fantasy" — says it'd cost billions, jeopardise pensions, draw "a slate curtain across the Welsh border."
Reform UK	☐ Against	Welsh leader Dan Thomas: "Rhun's push for independence will divide Wales." Called White Paper "a distraction."
Welsh Liberal Democrats	☐ Against	Second priority in manifesto: "Stop independence." Pledged "not a single penny" on independence agenda.
Wales Green Party	☐ For	Leader Anthony Slaughter: "Independence is not just viable but essential to building the fairer, greener future for Wales."

Plaid Cymru Government's Position

Rhun ap Iorwerth became First Minister on **12 May 2026** with support from the two Green MSs (Labour and Lib Dems abstained). Key commitments:

- **No referendum in this term** — ruled out publicly multiple times
 - **"Make the case"** — use government to "prove to people it would be possible"
 - **Request devolution of indyref power** — formally request Westminster devolve the right to decide on timeline, question and process
 - **White Paper** — £500k commission to produce a detailed case for independence
 - **Celtic Alliance** — ap Iorwerth has pushed for a Celtic Alliance, declaring "the old union is dead"
 - **Crown Estate campaign (25 May)** — Plaid Cymru launched a public messaging campaign demanding control over the Crown Estate, arguing Wales' natural resources should be managed in Wales, not Westminster. This is their first major independence-adjacent public campaign since forming government.
 - **"Wales Must Define Itself" (26 May)** — Nation.Cymru opinion piece by Ben Wildsmith analyses Plaid's government and the wider constitutional questions around Welsh national identity post-election
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Key Arguments

Economic

- **Barnett Formula** — Yes side argues Wales is underfunded by billions; No side says independence would expose a major fiscal gap
- **Oil/Energy** — Crown Estate revenues from Welsh waters are a major flashpoint; YesCymru campaigning on resource sovereignty
- **EU Membership** — Plaid uses post-Brexit arguments; advocates argue Wales could rejoin the EU as an independent nation
- **Cost of independence** — Conservatives cite "billions to our economy"; Plaid disputes these figures

Cultural

- **Welsh language** — central to national identity; language rights seen as incomplete within the UK
- **Generational shift** — 72% of 25-34 year olds backing independence suggests rising long-term support

Constitutional

- **Federalism vs Independence** — Labour pushes strengthening devolution; Plaid says the current system is "unsustainable"
- **Crown Estate** — control over Welsh waters and energy resources a key sovereignty issue

Independence Movement

- **YesCymru** — main grassroots campaign group; hold annual March for Independence events
- **Indy Curiad (Independence Beat)** — cultural/arts wing of the movement
- **AUOB Cymru** — organises marches (Barry Apr 2025, Apr 2026; Cardiff, Bangor, Wrexham, Carmarthen, Swansea)
- Largest recent march: ~10,000 in Cardiff (2022)

Comparison to Scotland

Metric	Wales	Scotland
Independence support	26-35%	~45-50%
Young people support	72% of 25-34 yr olds	Similar age skew
Pro-indy in government	Yes (Plaid Cymru, minority)	Yes (SNP since 2007)
Indyref commitment	No this term	Ongoing push for indyref2
Party dominance	Plaid ~30-32% vote share	SNP ~45-50% vote share

Plaid is explicitly following the SNP model: get into power → make the case → secure a referendum. However, Rhun has been more cautious, ruling out a referendum this term. The SNP's difficulties (internal divisions, declining polls) have been noted by Welsh observers.

Twitter/X Discussion

🗨️ Source: Nitter search, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found on Nitter/X for this period — section created on setup.

Reddit Discussion

👤 Source: Reddit, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found yet — section created on setup.

Sources

- Nation.Cymru: <https://nation.cymru/>
 - Wales Online: <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/>
 - YouGov: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/trackers/welsh-independence>
 - Cardiff University Welsh Political Barometer
 - YesCymru: <https://www.yes.cymru/>
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