

Electoral  
 Reform  
 Society  
Cymru

# WELSH POWER REPORT II

## THE POWER & VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES



## MORE INFORMATION

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## ABOUT ERS CYMRU

The Electoral Reform Society Cymru operates on a simple premise – that politics can be better than it is. We are campaigning for a better democracy in Wales, and across the UK. Our vision is a representative democracy fit for the 21st century. We know that every year that passes with our steam age political system still in place, is a year of missed opportunity for the people of Wales. We believe in a democracy where:

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- Every vote and every voice has value and should be heard;
- 
- Everyone is able to shape the decisions that affect their lives;
- 
- Our institutions reflect the people they serve;
- 
- People are able to hold those in power to account;
- 
- Politics offers people real alternatives.

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# INTRODUCTION

This year the  
National Assembly  
turns **16**  
years old

Under devolution, Wales is a young democratic nation; yet in many ways our youth does not equal vibrancy. Turn out for Assembly elections has been consistently low, never regaining the 'high' of 46% in 1999, and falling as low as 37% in 2007.

Whilst political disengagement affects all ages, the sense of disconnection from formal politics is most acute amongst young people. In the 2010 General Election, over three-quarters of those aged 65 or over voted; compared to fewer than half of under-25s. Survey findings released by the Welsh research institute WISERD<sup>1</sup> add to the body of evidence showing that young people are switching off from formal party politics.

But hope remains. Whilst faith in politicians is low, a belief in democracy is high. WISERD found nearly 90% of those it surveyed felt that who's in charge mattered after this year's general election; and nearly two thirds said politics affects their life 'a lot' or 'a bit', opposed to 30% who said 'not at all'.

The conventional wisdom is that voting is something individuals tend to do in later life. Yet British Election Study data shows that this may no longer be the case. Within general turnout levels, something worrying is afoot:

the gap between the proportion of younger people voting versus the older population appears to be widening. This, we warn, is the turn-out time bomb.

Being an active citizen was never just about voting; but citizenship and what it means is changing. In Wales, as in Scotland and England, the relationship between the state and the citizen is evolving. Power is shifting, and citizens will increasingly take responsibility for shaping more of the decisions that affect their lives. In these circumstances the need for a more informed, more engaged citizenry increases. Ensuring young people are informed and engaged is therefore essential to shaping a Wales we want for this and future generations.

Wales led the UK when, in 2011, it enshrined the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into law, asserting Article 12 which identifies the right of children and young people to participate and have a say over the decisions which impact on them. This welcome obligation has, we argue, been undermined by the decision to remove funding from Funky Dragon, Wales' National Youth Assembly, and leave Wales as the only nation in Europe without a version of a national youth parliament.

This report, our second Welsh Power Report<sup>2</sup>, explores how informed and engaged young people are and what steps can be taken to enable better engagement. We raise concerns about how the new system of voter registration

is working for young people and look in more depth at the 'turn-out time bomb'. We discuss young people's understanding and examine whether current approaches to political education and youth participation in Wales are working effectively. We also hear from a number of politicians on their experiences of life as young people in elected office.

We conclude with a number of headline recommendations. We want the Welsh Government and Wales' political parties to commit to:

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Implement votes  
at 16

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Improve political  
education in schools

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Establish a Wales  
Youth Assembly

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STEVE BROOKS  
DIRECTOR  
ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY CYMRU

<sup>1</sup> See WISERD for more information at <http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> S Brooks and O ap Gareth, Welsh Power Report: Women in Public Life (ERS:2013), available at <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/downloadfile.php?PublicationFile=274>

# Votes at 16: The road to a fair franchise

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The Scottish independence referendum proved that 16 and 17 year olds are more than capable of taking important political decisions. That's why we support lowering the voting age for all public elections in the UK<sup>3</sup>, and why we believe power over the franchise for Welsh elections should be devolved to the National Assembly for Wales.

The road to a fair franchise has been a long one. The 1918 Representation of the People Act was a landmark piece of legislation that extended the franchise (voting rights) for men and women across the UK. For the first time, all men over the age of 21 could participate in UK general elections regardless of property rights. Votes for women, spearheaded by the Suffragette movement, was also included in the act though with significant restrictions; most notably that all women, regardless of property, would be disallowed from voting until they reached 30.

In 1928, further legislation to equalise the franchise for men and women was introduced by the UK Conservative government and passed by Parliament. Wales, within the UK, like most European democracies kept the age of majority at 21 for much of the twentieth century, but throughout the 1960s, successive nations lowered the voting age to 18. The 1969 Representation of the People Act enacted that change for the UK.

Since 1999 when the Liberal Democrats unsuccessfully sought to lower the voting age a number of independent reports have supported lowering the voting age. By the end of the 2000s, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the Green party and the SNP had all strengthened their policy positions in support of votes at 16. But the major turning point came in 2011.



The Edinburgh Agreement around the Independence Referendum included a commitment by the UK Government to introduce a section 30 order allowing the Scottish Government to extend the franchise for the referendum to include 16 and 17 year olds. This proposal was legislated for in the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Act 2014.

Following the participation of 16 and 17 year olds in the independence poll, the case for lowering the age of majority in Scotland has become incontrovertible, with the UK Government conceding in 2014 that votes at 16 would form part of the Smith Commission package of new devolved powers. In Autumn

2014, the Electoral Reform Society Cymru and others (including Bite the Ballot who are included as a case study in this report) worked with the Labour frontbench, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and crossbenchers in the House of Lords to persuade the UK Government to accept that 16 and 17 year olds should be given the vote in any future referendum on income tax powers for the National Assembly.

As part of the St. David's Day agreement on devolution, the UK Government has announced its intention to devolve power over lowering the voting age to the National Assembly; a move which is supported by the Labour party and Plaid Cymru. The challenge now is to ensure that this takes place well ahead of the 2016 Assembly election, to allow sufficient time for AMs to pass new legislation, and for the Electoral Commission and local authorities to implement it.

# Voter registration: a missing generation?

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For young people, getting onto the electoral register is a real hurdle even before they choose whether they want to vote or not. This adversely affects some groups more than others – and in particular, young people. Indeed, it is even difficult to measure turnout accurately as it is based on those who are registered and so it is probable that we are underestimating the scale of the problem.

Power over voter registration remains the responsibility of the UK Parliament. Local authorities have a statutory duty to maintain an ‘accurate and complete’ register of everyone in their area. The franchise for all elections in Wales is 18, although 16 and 17 year olds will be able to vote in any future referendum on the devolution of some income tax powers. 16 and 17 year olds can also be added to the electoral roll ahead of their reaching the ‘age of majority’ at 18.

However, how people register to vote is changing, and there remains a real risk that young people could ‘drop off’ the register.

In 2011 legislation was passed that replaced ‘household registration’ with Individual Electoral Registration (IER). This change is significant and welcome in principle, but there is a danger that the number of young people registered to vote may decline.

The current system is household registration. This is a Victorian-era system from a time when being able to vote was based on property rights. We’re now the only Western democracy that still uses household registration. The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) will improve the accuracy of the register and help to counter fraud. It’s the right move, but it needs to be done in the right way. However, concern remains that in the move from household to individual registration, young people are at considerable risk of dropping off the register. There

are a number of social groups at risk. As a general rule of thumb, the more 'settled' at home and included in their community a citizen is, the more likely they are to be registered. Owner occupiers are more likely to be registered than renters, and social renters are more likely to be registered than private renters. Similarly, immigrants from more established diaspora communities that are more economically active and socially included are more likely to be registered than recent arrivals or black and minority ethnic communities that experience greater levels of social exclusion.

For young people in particular, the risk of non-registration is two-fold. Young people are more likely than the general population to be resident in either temporary or short-term lets, making up a greater proportion of the private rental market than the general population. Figures from the UK Department for Communities & Local Government<sup>4</sup> highlight this contrast.

Three-quarters of 16-24 year olds in rented accommodation are in the private sector rather than in social housing (provided by a local authority or a housing association). Conversely, older people are more likely to live in social housing and people are more likely to reside for longer in social housing. Over a third of private renters have lived in their home for a year or less, with two-thirds residing in their current home for three years or less. This level of upheaval is generally not seen within social housing. Only one in ten social renters has been in their current home for less than a year. In addition, recent changes under IER mean universities can no longer use household data to group register students in halls of residence.

Figures<sup>5</sup> released by the Cabinet Office analysing the 'completeness' of the electoral register illustrate the scale of the challenge.

In short, young people are overwhelmingly more likely to be living in private rented accommodation; tenants in private accommodation are more likely to move address; and people who are more likely to move address are less likely to be on the electoral register.

4 See for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/social-and-private-renters>

5 Cabinet Office, Electoral Registration Analysis (July 31 2013), available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/226739/Electoral-Registration-Analysis-CO.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226739/Electoral-Registration-Analysis-CO.pdf) For more information, see The Electoral Commission: Great Britain's Electoral Registers, 2011: [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/145366/Great-Britains-electoral-registers-2011.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/145366/Great-Britains-electoral-registers-2011.pdf), and update, here: [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf)

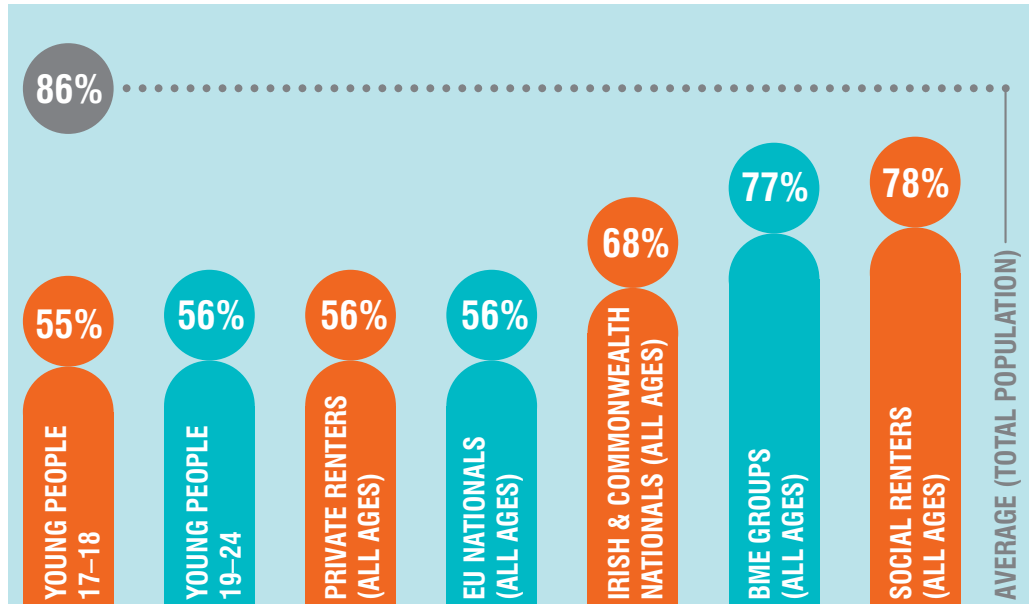


Figure 1: Voter Registration Levels by Group (UK, 2013)

Electoral Commission data shows  
the general rule of thumb

**ON AGE**

and registration rates:

the **older** you are

the more likely you are  
to be registered to **VOTE**

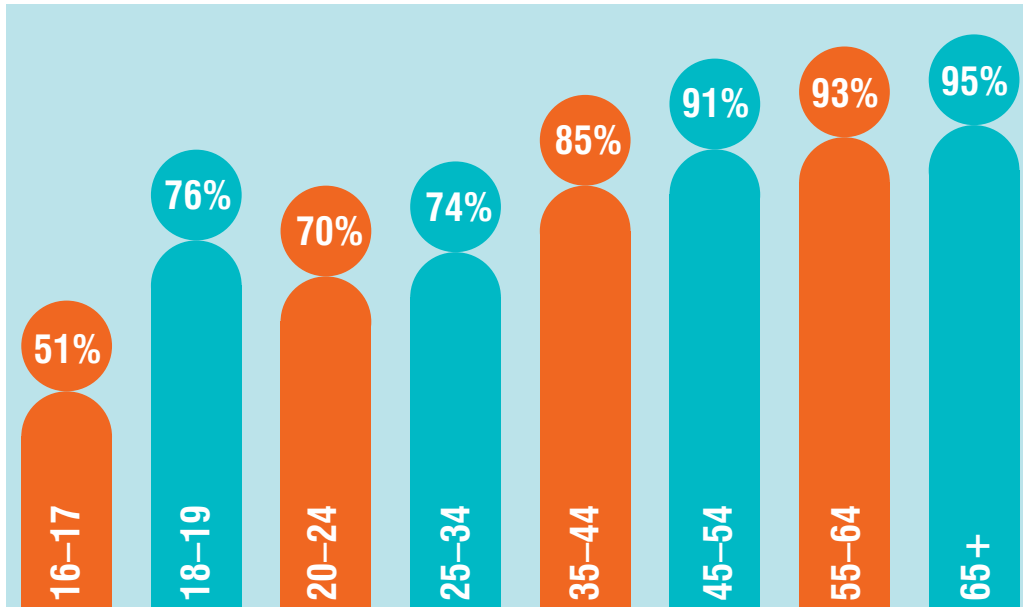


Figure 2: Voter Registration Levels by Age (UK, 2014)

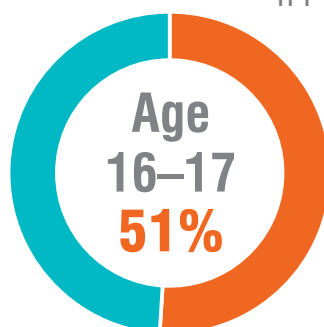
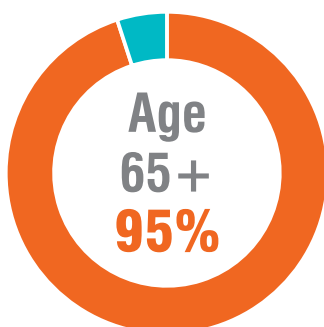
People over the age of 65 are nearly  
**twice as likely**

to be registered to vote as **16 & 17** year olds.

Despite being eligible to be added to the electoral register,  
it appears that 16 & 17 years are

**NOT BEING INCLUDED**

in corresponding numbers



# interview Mitch Theaker

Mitch Theaker was elected as councillor in 2012, and at the time was not only Wales' youngest councillor, but also the youngest cabinet member in the country. Here Mitch explains how his involvement with youth forums, and then the Labour party, led him into politics; he then reflects on life as a senior councillor when very often he found himself to be the youngest person in the room.

I got involved in politics at a young age when I was encouraged to take part in youth forums. Then a friend of my mum's asked if I wanted to come to a Labour party meeting just to see what it was like. After going to the first meeting I actually found it fascinating. So I started helping out with Jane Davidson's Assembly campaign. When I got to Swansea University, I became involved with Labour Students and Movement for Change. That's when being a member became not just leafleting and canvassing, but about campaigning for change. That's what got me into being a proper activist.

It wasn't that I was taught politics in school. I don't remember learning about politics or parties in school, or even citizenship or how to get involved. There was a school council. I think in my school they did it as it was a statutory obligation, and so there was never that one passionate teacher who thinks citizenship needs to be done right. The best school councils I've seen have that one passionate teacher.

Some people see school councils as just a statutory obligation rather than about the empowerment of young people; about changing the mind-set that adults are the only ones who know what's good for young people. When you speak to kids at primary school, they have a wonderful idea of what an anti-bullying policy should look like.

I got involved in Funky Dragon, and the Children's Commissioner's advisory board and I absolutely loved it; this idea that we could influence policy. The issue with youth forums is that they felt quite tokenistic and tick-box.

Maybe it was about building confidence and getting people more involved, but I look back and think, well, it's hard to identify real palpable change that came. Movement for Change nailed it because they had the idea of finding issues that people on the ground feel passionate about. They're about people on the ground and making a palpable change.

*Following university, Mitch was elected in Swansea, when Labour took control of the council. He was appointed Cabinet Member for Opportunities for Children & Young People, a post he held until 2014, when the council's ruling Labour Group changed leaders. Mitch reflects on what it's like to be a senior councillor at a young age.*

Sometimes it can be an issue – if you're talking budget cuts you do get the reaction "Why is there a kid here talking about budget cuts to my school or community"? And every now and then you feel you have to re-establish your skills and why you should be there. The then leader, David Phillips, appointed me based on my CV when he didn't know me personally. The negative part was that there were some Labour councillors, who are still there now, and I believe are in the new administration, who had the old-fashioned sense of entitlement. I'm sure you get them in every council and every walk of life, the people who think they should get positions as it's their turn. Nothing to do with merit or passion or vision, but who's served the longest.

*But it wasn't just elected members Mitch had to deal with; the council's permanent staff often created difficulties.*

Sometimes they'd think you're a bit of an easy ride, or maybe don't have to take you so seriously. There's two occasions in my two and a half years as cabinet member – not a lot – where I got the leader involved, mostly they were fine and the skill of the people we had at Swansea was brilliant. They were just as enthusiastic and visionary especially newly appointed ones. They viewed it as a shared culture.

I remember going to one school and the kids didn't believe I was the councillor and cabinet member. And the teacher said "I'm really sorry, I think they were expecting a grumpy old man to turn up!"

*Mitch has clear advice on how decision-makers can involve young people more.*

Find topics people care about – and they are there – and make people believe that they can actually make a difference, and they do get involved. There's some culture change also – the council cannot be responsible for absolutely everything in people's lives. In America they have more community campaign and community involvement. So when people realise they can change the way their city works, or national government works, then they get more involved. Whether I'd suggest young people should run for council is another question!



# Voting and the 'turn-out time bomb'

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'Universal suffrage' means more than the right to vote: citizens must also be given the opportunity to vote. Rights are meaningless unless individuals are empowered to exercise them. The way Wales votes has remained largely unchanged for generations. If he were alive today, David Lloyd George's election agent would probably recognise how modern Polling Day works.

Aside from postal and proxy voting, voting in person is largely the same as in the Edwardian era – restricted to an individual presenting themselves on a designated day to a polling station in a designated location.

The trend across all UK public elections in recent years has been falling turn-out, hitting rock bottom in the 2001 General Election at 59% and never recovering to pre-2001 levels. The Hansard Society has been working to understand why people are switching off from elections and in 2014 published its 11th Audit of Political Engagement<sup>6</sup> (figure 3). Whilst its findings on the state of politics are sobering, particular alarm bells should be sounded at the level of malaise that exists amongst young people.

Less than a quarter of under 25s and barely more than a third of 25-34 year olds intend to vote in the 2015 UK General Election. Whilst older people don't act as an undifferentiated bloc in wanting to have their say, around two thirds of over 65s do intend to cast their ballot. But conventional wisdom argues that older people have always been more likely to vote. Younger people have 'other things to do', and an individual's civic duty often kicks in once they've settled down, and when one has more of a personal stake in the outcome of elections.

But this picture is becoming more complex. Between 1964 and 1997, turn-out at General Elections bounced around in the 70s, with a high of 79% in the first general

<sup>6</sup> For more information the Hansard Society Audit of Political Engagement (2014) here: <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/research/public-attitudes/audit-of-political-engagement/>



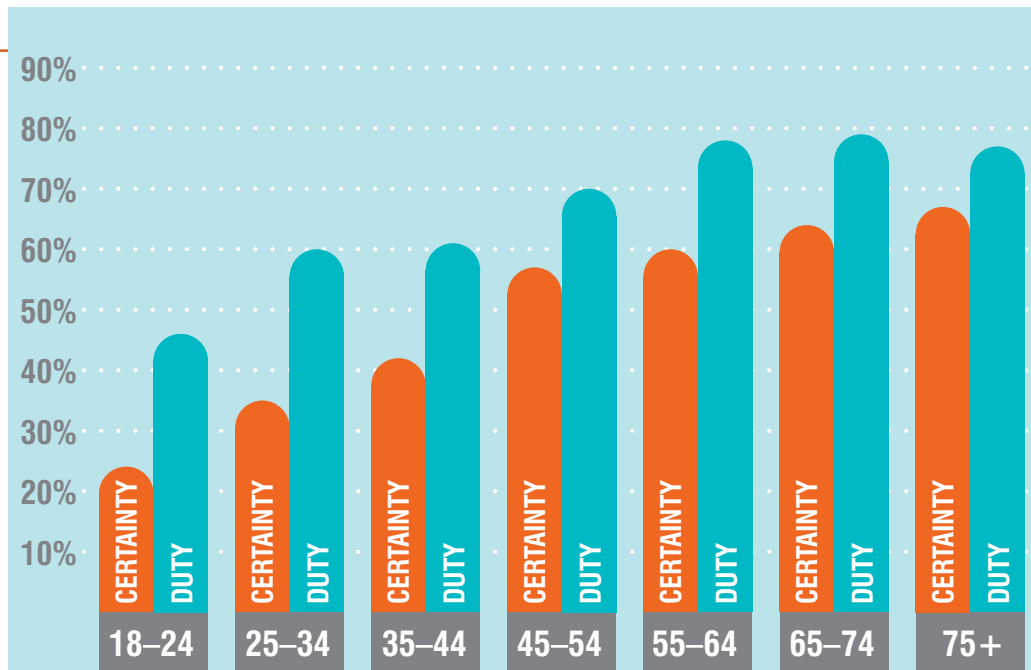


Figure 3: Certainty to Vote / Duty to Vote<sup>7</sup> (by Age, UK, 2014)

election of 1974 and lows of 71 and 72% in the 2001 and 1970 elections respectively. There are many factors that have an effect on turn-out. Aside from political factors like the state of the economy, or popularity of leaders, even things like weather and the completeness of the register all have an impact.

Figures<sup>8</sup> (below) released by the House of Commons using British Election Study data show that within general turn-out levels, something worrying is afoot. The gap between the proportion of young people voting and the rest of the population appears to be widening. At the 1970 General Election, overall turnout was 72%; 65% for 18-24 year olds, and 67% for 25-34 year olds. By 2005, the worst year in terms of under 24s voting, the gap was at its

widest; 61% of voters turned out, compared to just 38% of under 24s. Whilst the gap narrowed in 2010 and could do so again in 2015, there are two key observations that worry the Electoral Reform Society.

Firstly, the long-term trend is an **increasing** gap between turnout amongst young people and the population as a whole.

Secondly, as the electoral register is less complete for young people, the number of young people who are of voting age but are not on the register (and therefore cannot vote) masks a far greater problem. If more young people fall off the register, figures such as those given above are the tip of an iceberg.

7 The question asked was "To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'It is my duty to vote in all types of elections'"

8 See British Election Study (re-analysis of datasets) HC Library Research Paper 03/59 Note: Data for 1964 and 1966 refers to people aged 21-24 as the voting age was 21 not 18 available via [www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN01467.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN01467.pdf).

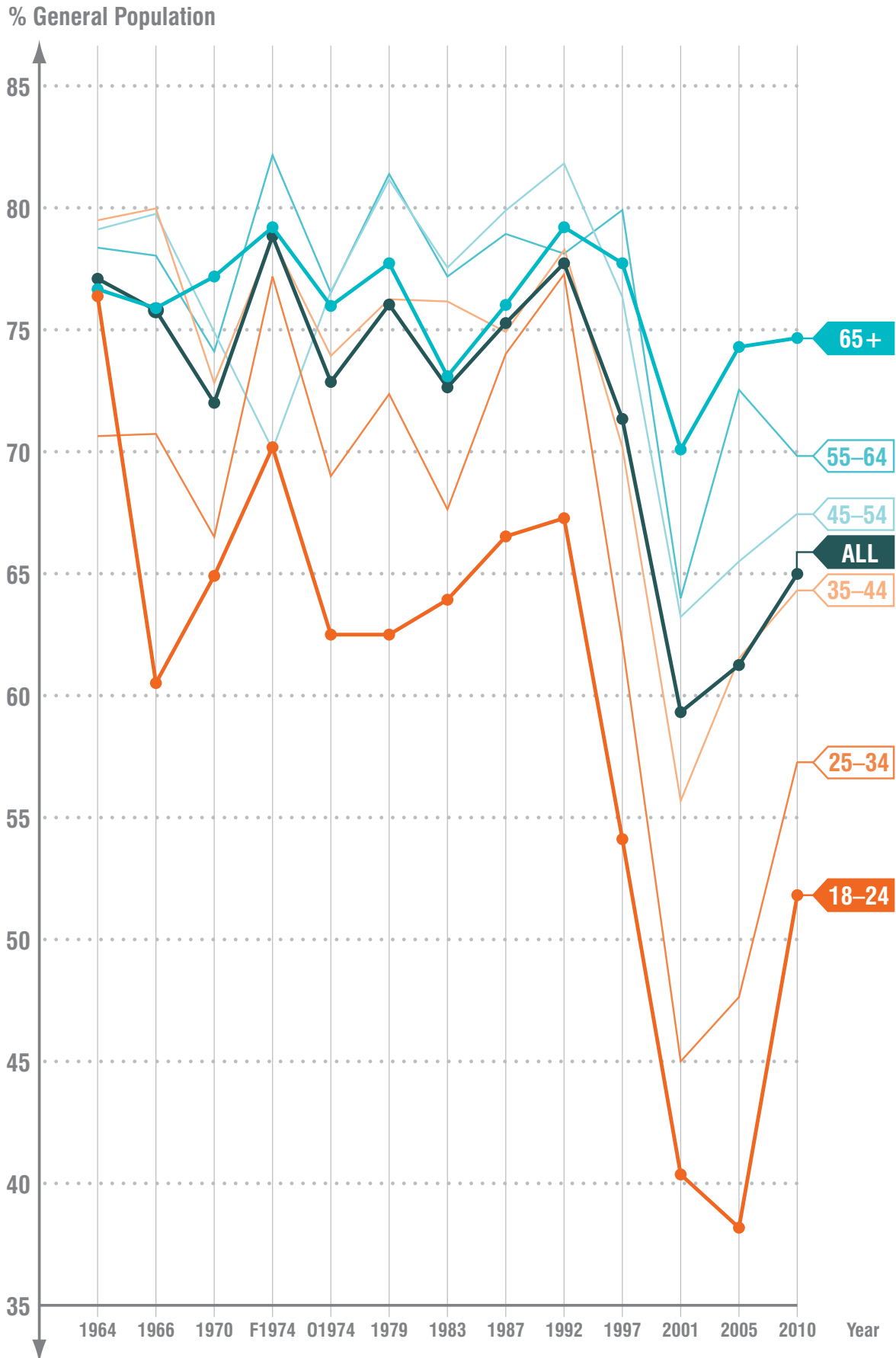
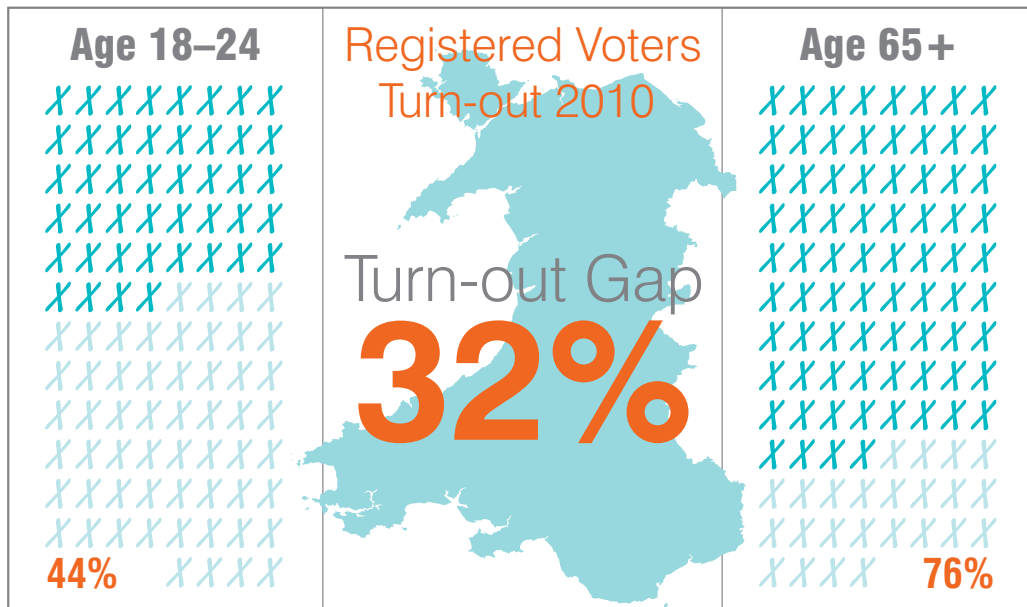
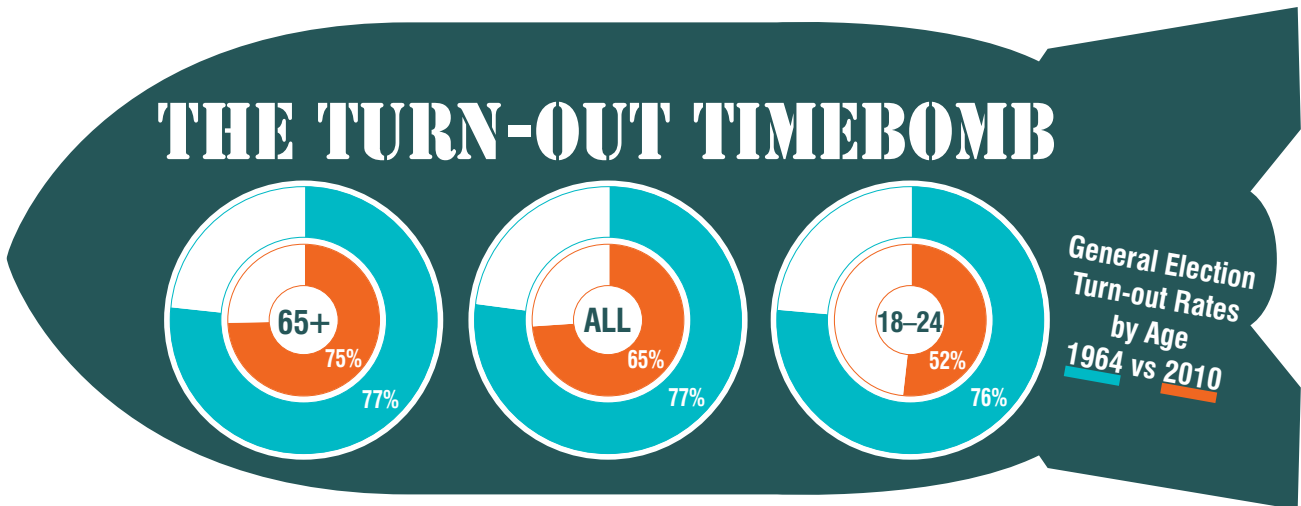


Figure 4: General Election Turn-out Rates<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> G Lodge, G Gottfried, S Birch, The Political Inclusion of Young People (Democratic Audit 2012), available at <http://www.democraticaudit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Lodge-Gottfried-and-Birch-Young-People-and-Citizenship.pdf>



# interview Bethan Jenkins

Bethan Jenkins is Plaid Cymru Assembly Member for South Wales West, being first elected in 2007. Political from an early age, Bethan was only drawn to party politics in her final days in the student movement.

I come from a political family but not in a partisan sense. My mum and dad were involved in protests against opencast mining and against the apartheid system in South Africa. This was a normal part of life for me.

I wasn't political in school though. It's when I went to University that I got more involved in Student politics. When I was Union President at Aberystwyth University, there was the campaign against tuition fees. I was also part of the peace movement when the Iraq war started, even organizing protests in Cardiff.

I liked the campaigning side, but I wasn't a member of a party until the end of my role as President. Plaid Cymru stood against Labour's plans to bring Student fees into Wales. I got a job with them trying to transform how young people got involved in Plaid. So that's when I became part of Plaid and working with Leanne Wood and Jill Evans.

I came to Plaid at quite a difficult time. They asked me to come to a count in Ceredigion expecting to be successful, and of course Simon (Thomas) lost his seat that night. But it was actually good to see the hard realities of politics. I think a lot of people come in and think that I'll stand as AM or councillor and think I'm going to win. But that's not reality – so I got to see the harsh reality straight off. It didn't put me off!

Leanne (Wood) was someone young, different, who could speak in a way that could get young people into politics on their own terms – that was quite appealing. I knew nothing about Plaid growing up, they were not on the agenda, I only saw Labour and I did not feel that they represented me and young people growing up in Merthyr. Plaid were visible and active in Aberystwyth, and Labour did nothing there – so there were new influences and that was exciting too.

*For Bethan, politics was something she had to learn, as it was not taught or encouraged at school.*

That was one of the main reasons I wanted to study politics at university, because there was no chance to examine politics in school at all.

It was not that I had no interest in politics in school, it just was not available and there were no avenues to do it. There was the school council, but the only thing it did was the end of term party. The way they work now in schools has changed a lot, and they're looking at things like school menu, even what courses students want in some places.

Once, S4C came to makeover our sixth form room, and I was quite chuffed that we'd done something that's successful. It was nothing political really, but at least we felt we'd changed something.

*Bethan was elected as an Assembly Member aged 25. She reflects on those early days, and the pressure to champion youth issues above other matters.*

It was harder for me at the start as I was elected as a woman at the top of the list – a lot were not comfortable with the policy and some people felt that people like me should not have come on so quickly in the party. That tension was also public in that you feel you have to justify yourself at every turn, unlike everyone else. Being young and looking different was a part of it. You feel that you have to be good at everything or someone will jump on it. A lot has changed since, with more and more young elected leaders.

I had a big campaign with Swansea Visteon pensioners who had lost their pension from Ford. The irony is that I've done more campaigns with older people since those have been the issues in my area. It's not been a conscious effort to not work with young people; I'm still passionate about getting young people into politics.

The one issue perhaps is that sometimes you get something like the portfolio of children and young people to the detriment of other things – sometimes you need a different challenge and I think it is important not to get pigeon-holed.

Being younger helps in introducing new themes to investigate in committees – I have been able to bring subjects others would not think about. And that's why it is important to have more than a couple of young people to be more representative of the outside world.

*Bethan finished by reflecting on the changes that need to happen to engage more young people in politics*

Online voting, they naturally use their apps and their iPad – they don't see it as natural to go to the polling station necessarily. We need to transform how political education is taught in school. There's a big problem that you can't be 'political' in school – but parties need to be seen so young people see how the parties work. Some schools go overboard worrying about that and not allowing you to go in there without the other parties and then the whole thing just collapses.

We need a strong body to represent young people. In my opinion Funky Dragon was never strong enough, and I was on the record saying that young people need a real Parliament. I'd rather it be funded by the Assembly rather than being part of the Government, but if you need the Welsh Government and the Commission to come together to fund it then fine – we've got nothing at the moment.

Maybe we can find more ways to promote young people to do things for themselves in the community from the grassroots up. Why not give training in campaigning for people to get skills in citizen activism before things arise, this is not something young people have unless they're with Oxfam or Amnesty or something.

Canada have public lotteries of the electoral roll, which comes up with ideas and policies to put to the Senate. I think it'd be good to trial in Wales.

We tend to just look at politicians and say you vote them in, they do it and that's it, and we vote you out if you're no use. For me, I'm a politician but am part of a team of people in the community. I work better with them than on my own – that's how I see politics. That's what I would like to see develop more than anything – communities that have been stepped on more than anyone, develop a way to say "no, we want to do this ourselves".



# Political Education and Citizenship in schools

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“Our children and young people need to be rooted in their own cultures and to have a strong sense of identity as citizens of Wales, the United Kingdom, Europe and the wider world. Engaged citizenship requires the kind of understanding of democracy, human rights, interdependence, sustainability and social justice that should inform their personal views and sense of commitment. Children and young people need an ability to deal with difficult and contested ethical issues such as those that can arise from developments in science and digital technologies. Active citizenship requires the confidence and resilience that underpin the ability to exert influence and participate in vigorous debate. That confidence should be built on a strong base of knowledge and respect for evidence.”

Professor Donaldson, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*<sup>10</sup>

Being an active citizen has never only been about voting. In Wales, as in Scotland and England, the relationship between the state and the citizen is evolving, and citizens will increasingly take responsibility for shaping more of the decisions that affect their lives.

Ensuring young people are informed and engaged is therefore essential to shaping 'successful futures' for young people in Wales. Schools should play their part in giving young Welsh citizens the tools they need to take an active part in society and influence decisions that directly affect them in a difficult economic climate. Political education and citizenship in schools is about two mutually reinforcing aspects: providing young people with the information they need about how democracy works in Wales (imparting knowledge to pupils); and giving young people the practical skills needed to take an active part in that democracy through participation at school (developing pupils' skills as active citizens).

This is often not how people understand 'political education'. The term 'political education' can cause particular unease and inertia within the teaching profession. The 1996 Education Act (section 406) requires school governing bodies, head-teachers and local education authorities to forbid the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in schools; and to forbid the pursuit of partisan

political activities by pupils under the age of 12 while in school. Section 407 requires them to take all reasonably practical steps to ensure that, where political or controversial issues are brought to pupils' attention, they are offered a balanced presentation or opposing views.

In his influential report on Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, Professor Bernard Crick identified the challenges:

*'Educators are aware that controversial issues may also be sensitive issues. Head-teachers, governors and members of the local education committee may worry or speculate about the possibility of parents being afraid of biased teaching and even of attempts to indoctrinate their pupils. Understandably some teachers, particularly newly qualified teachers, may lack confidence when approaching these issues.'*<sup>11</sup>

Few teachers in Wales would argue against the need for pupils and young people to understand how democracy affects them. As such, confidence in subject knowledge and their own practitioner skills are a vital part in developing political education and citizenship in schools. Working with pupils and young people is a privilege. It carries the responsibility of encouraging and developing young minds without influencing and indoctrinating. This requires the development of highly skilled and knowledgeable teachers.<sup>12</sup>

11 Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (1998), available at <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4385/1/crickreport1998.pdf>

12 This reflects wider needs in Welsh Education – Donaldson advocates the need for highly skilled and knowledgeable teachers.



Crick's report provides guidance on what sort of citizenship education schools should look to develop:

*“Active citizenship’ is our aim throughout... it is obvious that all formal preparation for citizenship in adult life can be helped or hindered by the ethos and organisation of a school, whether pupils are given opportunities for exercising responsibilities and initiatives or not; and also whether they are consulted realistically on matters where their opinions can prove relevant both to the efficient running of a school and to their general motivation for learning. In some schools these are already common practices, while in others absent or only occasional.”*

Publication of the Crick report was a seminal moment in the development of citizenship education in the UK and over the following years influenced the direction of Government policy both in Westminster and the devolved nations.

The report's findings are pioneering and any evaluation of how far we have come in terms of citizenship education, should revisit the findings and recommendations of the Crick report, to discover which of these are still to be implemented.

A large number of educationalists, local education authorities and schools in Wales had contributed to the findings of the Crick report and the influence of this report is clearly seen on Welsh Government policy from the turn of the century.

Welsh Government decided not to introduce citizenship education as a subject in its own right, but instead sought to incorporate it into three areas of school provision – Personal and Social Education (PSE), Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) and the Welsh Baccalaureate (WBQ).<sup>13</sup>

As our case study (see page 48) illustrates, PSE can have a significant impact on the whole school, both in terms of organising structure and school ethos. If effectively prioritised and resourced, it can be beneficial to a whole school approach to citizenship education. Our case study suggests that having a dedicated PSE department with a specialist head of department can lead to PSE being an important fulcrum between the curriculum needs and the wellbeing needs of pupils and can lead to both aspects of school life being mutually reinforcing. By contrast, our discussions with experts in the field highlight that it is often ineffectively delivered, under-resourced and lacks prestige.

ERS Cymru recommends that the Welsh Government commissions Estyn to specifically review whether these areas provide sufficient rigour and opportunity for pupils and young people to develop an effective understanding of democracy in Wales. The review should be adapted to the developing Donaldson agenda (see below). In order to track progress over the long term, five year review cycles should be established following the Assembly elections in 2016.

<sup>13</sup> For details on these different areas of provision, see <http://www.fivenations.net/wales.html>



## Pupil Participation and school councils

In 2005 Welsh Government passed legislation stating that every primary, secondary and special school in Wales must have a school council up and running by November 2006.<sup>14</sup> At that time Wales was the first country in the UK to make this law. This remains the template for the role of school councils today.

This legislation identifies school councils as of paramount importance in the Welsh Government's priority to involve and consult

young people more on the services they receive, both in and out of school.

*'Schools Councils provide practical first-hand experience of decision-making and democratic processes... They enable children and young people to participate effectively in schools and debate and address issues of concern to them and their school.'*<sup>15</sup>

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Estyn commented on the importance of school councils in their report in March 2007,

*'Participation of children and young people (3-11 year olds) in local decision-making issues that affect their lives.'*

In good schools, the school council helps to develop:

- pupils' speaking, listening and personal and social skills:
  - positive attitudes to citizenship and democracy; and
  - good levels of confidence and self-esteem.<sup>16</sup>
- 

In 2011 Wales became the first country in the UK to make the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) part of its domestic law. One of these rights ("Article 12") which identifies children and young people's rights to participation states that children and young people should have a say when people are making decisions that affect them.

Decision-makers at the time clearly understood the potential of pupil participation and school councils to make for a better school experience for all pupils, to establish better decision-making processes, and provide pupils with key skills. However, our discussions in our expert roundtables highlighted significant variation

in the quality of learning experience related to pupil participation remains in schools across Wales. While there will always be 'beacons of exemplar practice', it is clear that this is not being replicated consistently.

We should know the extent of these inconsistencies. ERS Cymru recommends that as part of the Estyn Review recommended above, that Estyn also undertakes a review of pupil participation in primary and secondary schools. In order to track progress over the long term, five year review cycles should be established following the Assembly elections in 2016. The review should be adapted to the developing Donaldson agenda (see below).

14 Welsh Government, The School Councils Regulations (2005), available here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2005/3200/contents/made>

15 <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4385/1/crickreport1998.pdf>

16 Estyn, 'Participation of children and young people (3-11 year olds) in local decision-making issues that affect their lives.' (March 2007), p 15; available at: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/174801.9/participation-of-children-and-young-people-3-11-year-olds-in-local-decision-making-issues-that-affect-their-lives-march-2007?navmap=30,163>,

Our discussions with experts in the field suggest that a lack of clarity in many schools about the role which the School Council is meant to fulfil. To address this, ERS Cymru recommends that clear roles and responsibilities of school councils should be placed on a statutory basis. This would ensure an increased understanding of the role of school councils and the part they can play to enhance the school experience and pupils' well-being. The provision of clearer guidance, and support and training for teachers would also help ensure a more consistent experience of participation for all our pupils and young people.

Our case study (Bite the Ballot – page 50) suggests that peer-led drives on voter registration are the most effective way to reach young people. School councils can also provide a network to help increase voter registration through peer groups. The Welsh Government should consider the part school councils can play in engaging pupils in voter registration throughout Wales.

## The Donaldson Report and the future of education in Wales

Education in Wales is set for more change following the unveiling of the Donaldson report in February 2015.

Professor Graham Donaldson calls for the Welsh Government to set a clearer strategy that specifies who is in charge of different aspects of educational delivery, and works with all involved in education to set a long-term vision for education in Wales. The review discusses building teacher capacity, teacher professionalism and teacher creativeness.

Donaldson states that, '*a central theme in the Review has been the need to be clear about the overall purposes that the curriculum is seeking to serve.*' Donaldson identifies four key purposes:

'The purposes of the curriculum in Wales should be that pupils and young people develop as:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world;
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.<sup>17</sup>

Teachers will be heartened to see an analysis of 'the purposes of the curriculum' as a starting point for discussion on the future of education in Wales. A shared long-term vision for the future of education in Wales is paramount.

It is the third and fourth of these purposes which carry greatest resonance with Electoral Reform Society Cymru. How can pupils and young people in Wales become 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world' and 'lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society' without a more effective understanding of how democracy and the different levels of democracy affect them in Wales? Further questions arise from developments such as the proposed extension of the franchise to young people from the age of 16 (announced in the St David's Day agreement<sup>18</sup>). Do we have in place in Wales an education system which equips pupils and young people to feel confident enough to exercise their right to vote?

The recommendations of the Donaldson review form the basis of a systematic response to these challenges. Electoral Reform Society Cymru looks forward to contributing to the development of an agenda that allows young people to fulfil their potential as 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world' who can 'understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights.'<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

If we are to seriously tackle the issue of political apathy, then we are going to have to consider the part schools and education play in the delivery of a more effective understanding of democracy in Wales.

Pupils and young people in school must be provided with the opportunity to understand the democratic processes at work in this country. They must be given the opportunity to explore and discuss the political issues that are most meaningful to them and ultimately recognise through exercising their rights that their vote matters and that they can bring about change.

Well-informed young citizens are essential, not only for their own individual well-being, but to help Wales as a whole confront the challenges of the future. As models of good governance move towards requiring citizen experts' help in solving problems, it is incumbent upon us to face the challenge of providing young citizens with the tools to help create a successful future for Wales.

18 Powers for a Purpose (UK Government: 2015), available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powers-for-a-purpose-towards-a-lasting-devolution-settlement-for-wales>

19 Donaldson Review, p 30; ERS Cymru will be producing a follow up report in the next few months outlining in detail our response to this developing agenda.

# interview

## Kirsty Williams

Kirsty Williams is Assembly Member for Brecon & Radnor and leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats. In a frank interview, she talks about the pressures she faced as a young woman starting out in politics, and explains why she'll never look a gift-horse in the mouth.

I was very fortunate to grow up in a household where news, current affairs and politics were talked about. We'd have big Sunday lunches at my maternal grandma's and they would invariably be big rows over politics and what was happening.

I think as well, that I was interested in issues. I remember being very interested in the issue of Apartheid and forbidding my mother to buy South African fruit in the campaign to free Nelson Mandela. I skipped a year, started my A-level courses at 15 and studied politics and Government because I was genuinely interested. The first lesson we did was on the electoral system and I remember thinking "that's a really unfair way to elect a government", and I remember being absolutely outraged at the House of Lords and the idea of these people having decisions over my life. And I think it coincided with growing up in Thatcher's Britain where politics was quite divisive.

My politics teacher took us to see Roy Jenkins speak at Swansea University. I remember going back to school and saying to the teacher 'Oh my god that's amazing', and wanting to join the Liberal party. And that's how I got involved and I started going to my local party meetings in Llanelli, delivering leaflets etc.

I never joined the party with a view to be an elected politician – never, never, never, never did that. It never crossed my mind that that was what I would do. I went on a few demonstrations about ending student grants and introduction of loans, whilst a student in Manchester, but really didn't get involved in politics at all there.

I think what happened was that after I left university there was a council by-election in Llanelli and Peter Black came to help and he said "we've got a by election in Swansea, do you want to come help" and I said "Sure, I'll come and help". And then Peter said you should come to a Welsh national meeting rather than just a Llanelli one, and I went sure, yes, ok.

I stood in 1997 at the general election purely because in the run up to that election when I was working for Carmarthenshire College they allowed you to have time of absence if you were standing as a candidate. I was involved in the backroom running of the campaign and therefore was only a candidate to give me more time to do the campaign. It was purely practical to be a candidate in 1997 in Ogmore.

*Kirsty played a greater role in the Yes For Wales referendum campaign in 1997, and a “series of coincidences” provided several opportunities to step further forward*

There was a programme called *The Midnight Hour* and the producer said to David Cornock, “Oh God, we’ve got to do a programme on Welsh devolution, we have to have a Welsh Liberal Democrat, and preferably a woman as all the others on the panel are male” and David said “I’ve got just the girl for you!” and so I went to London and did the *Midnight Hour*. I didn’t know my arse from my elbow so what an amazing thing.

I did a lot of media around the need to vote yes. The result happened and then I got a phone call saying “the Secretary of State for Wales is going to ask you to be a member on the National Assembly Advisory Group” – I thought it was a wind-up, but he did ring.

*The Advisory Group (NAAG) wrote the rulebook for the new Assembly and provided the spring board for her election in 1999. If Kirsty was the ‘token young woman’, she wasn’t about to be offended by it.*

You’re equally cursed and blessed. The NAAG is a classic example and looking back on it now you can’t blame people for saying “what the hell is Ron Davies thinking of” when you know, I wasn’t very experienced and there was a lot of people in the party with more experience than I had. You do have a lot of people being very negative, who perceive your youth and inexperience as being problematic and use that against you. Equally, back then I was very useful in ticking 2 boxes, and people would allow you to do stuff because they needed it done and I absolutely embraced the tokenism. Some people asked me ‘Are you offended?’ You must be joking – I wasn’t offended because it gave me the opportunity to do stuff and I embraced every opportunity.

It’s a double-edged sword – it gave you the opportunity to do what you couldn’t have done otherwise, and you could use it in the next step. But equally it can be difficult to overcome some people’s prejudices. For every person who said “you can’t, she’s too young, too inexperienced” there’d be people like Alex Carlile who would say “leave her alone, she has to learn, let her do it”; people like Ron Davies who stuck his neck out for me. For every person saying “no” there was someone of equal weight in the organisation



## Kirsty Williams

saying “yes she can”. From that then, I had to find somewhere to stand. I got a lot of help and support in how to go about winning a selection from Evan Harris, who knew what it took to win a nomination when you were an underdog and I certainly was the underdog.

*Once elected, Kirsty found herself immediately working at the coalface*

It was a baptism of fire for me because I unexpectedly ended up being chair of the Health Committee, which was a massive accident. Mike German had allocated jobs immediately after we got elected, with the view that the Lib Dems would chair the Education Committee and that would be Jenny Randerson. But we ended up with the Health Committee. So he was absolutely stuffed at that point because he'd already announced who the spokespeople were and he couldn't sack me after 5 days!

Not unreasonably, he was not happy and made it very clear to me what the consequences would be if I didn't do it well enough. So yeah it was a baptism of fire and it was really hard to be in that position and to gain credibility.

The committee members were very good; it was more difficult with the Civil Service. I just remember the look of the guy in charge of the department in those days, absolute disdain on his face when he had to come and brief me. And I can say, looking back, you can't blame them completely. Again I was lucky, I had an amazing clerk of the committee who was really good, and a lot of people willing to give me a chance. You have to acknowledge what you don't know, there's no point trying to con your way through a situation like that. You'll just be exposed. So yeah, we went looking for help, and people were willing to give it. But you know, you encountered it all the time – people knew they were going to meet a woman, but if I went downstairs to get them myself they always thought I was the secretary. Always!

*And for younger politicians, there's a new set of personal challenges*

People are getting to positions of power a lot younger. Carwyn [Jones] is four years older, Leanne [Wood] a couple of months younger than me, and Andrew [RT Davies] somewhere in-between. Political leadership at that age brings its own issues. Carwyn and I have had the conversation about the challenges of political leadership when you have a young family. It's different from what leaders may have had in the past – they got to those positions of prime minister or in Carwyn's case FM, when their children were grown up. I think Blair was the first in a long time to have little children. That's one disadvantage; culture and expectations don't change despite the leaders being younger and having families.

*For Kirsty, being young and a woman brought additional public pressure*

There was a lot of media attention – some of which I didn't handle very well looking back. I think if I were to have anyone that young and inexperienced coming in to the Assembly group I'd like to think that we would be better at helping them through that process. It wasn't malicious, I just could have had more support than I did. Being told off for what you wore, being careful where you went – I mean what a crazy way to live your 20s! Even as to my prospective husband, the local party thought they were entitled to a view! I don't think people are aware how intrusive it can be on your personal life.



# From Funky Dragon to a National Youth Assembly for Wales

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Funky Dragon was Wales' version of a National Youth Parliament, and was set up in 2002, with core funding coming from the Welsh Government. Controversially, its funding was cut in July 2014. This has left Wales as the only nation in Europe without a version of a National Youth Parliament.

Funky Dragon was a peer-led organization which was set up to "provide opportunities for young people up to the age of 25 to have their voices heard on issues that affect them." Its Grand Council comprised of 100 young people, with 4 from each of Wales' Local Authorities, and 12 co-opted seats from other organisations. It also provided forums within Local Authorities. Its remit was to help deliver on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to support young people's voices and participation at a national level.

Some criticisms have been made of the set-up of the Funky Dragon. In particular, the fact that its funding and organisation was linked to the Welsh Government, rather than to the National Assembly. We would argue that this undermined the independence of Funky Dragon, and made it difficult for the body to engage with backbench Assembly Members. It also made it more vulnerable to the Welsh Government's funding priorities, than if it had been linked to the Assembly Commission (which deals with the Assembly's corporate body much like the Speaker does in Westminster). The historical funding link of Funky Dragon to the Welsh Government may go back to the lack of a separation of the corporate body of the Assembly and the Welsh Government when Funky Dragon was set up in 2002.



Funky Dragon, as is the case with Scotland's Youth Parliament and Northern Ireland's Youth Assembly appointed their representatives to the UK Youth Parliament. The UK Youth Parliament is managed by the British Youth Council and has been in place since 2000.

The UK, Scottish, and Northern Irish institutions are all peer-led and designed, with under 25s also being on the trustee board. At the present time of writing no such body exists in Wales.

The Welsh Government has argued that the funding application by the charity Children in Wales (CiW) fills the gap left by Funky Dragon. However, in recent evidence to the Petitions Committee<sup>20</sup>, CiW noted that they did not apply for funding to take the place of Funky Dragon, but instead in order to promote different models of participation among young people. The bid was originally done with the understanding that Funky Dragon would still be there, not in competition with it.

As Children in Wales noted, their model is:

*"a national participation model. It's not an assembly in terms of the model that Funky Dragon was based on."*

In the interim, CiW have taken on some of the functions of Funky Dragon. However, as they noted in their evidence, their organisation is not an elected structure. Furthermore, they cannot be a peer-led youth organisation designed by young people, led by young people and for the benefit of young people, as their trustees are not a peer-led group.

Children in Wales aims to get young people to participate directly in decisions that affect them. However this does not fill this 'elected gap', and it is currently unclear how it is going to be filled. While it is necessary that other participation models should work with a Youth parliament, it cannot replace one.

A recent 2014<sup>21</sup> petition which led to an inquiry by the Assembly Petitions Committee stated:

1. Young people, democratically elected at a local level, should have a National Platform to voice their views and opinions.
2. That platform should be called The Youth Assembly for Wales.
3. It should be able to work with all Elected Members including Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to further young peoples issues.
4. It should be supported to allow Welsh young people to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We agree with these points. Furthermore, we believe the Youth Assembly for Wales should be directly accountable to the National Assembly for Wales as a whole, to ensure proper lines of accountability. This would both secure its future independence, and also ensure that its structure works in terms of engaging with the political process and ensuring that Welsh young people are given a strongest voice possible through its Youth Assembly.

With the Donaldson review emphasising the role of citizenship in education, it is perverse that there is not a national elected Youth Assembly that joins up to participatory initiatives at the local level to likely developments in education.

20 Petitions Committee evidence session, National Assembly for Wales 3rd February 2015. Transcript available here: <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s36571/3%20February%202015.pdf>

21 Petition can be seen here: <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=10929&Opt=0>

# interview craig williams

Craig Williams is a Conservative councillor, having previously stood for the party in the last two Assembly elections and will contest the parliamentary seat of Cardiff North in 2015. Here Craig explains why getting things done proved to him the power of politics.

I can't remember the local issue at the time but I remember being frustrated with something. My grandfather was a church warden, and there are parish council meetings, and I went to a couple of those meetings and saw that something wasn't happening somewhere. I remember asking "Why?" and went to see Glyn Davies, as he was my Assembly Member at the time, and is now an MP. He helped sort this issue and so I thought, "Oh, there you are you can make a difference." As a young person walking into an AM's office, Glyn asked "Are you interested in politics?", and so it grew from there.

The interest was sparked because I had a problem, I helped solve the problem, and thought: you know if you've got a problem, get off your bum and do something about it.

It was that idea of "get off your bum and sort the problem out yourself" that led me to the Conservative party. And of course having the link with Glyn probably didn't harm, and he encouraged me from that side. In college I did an A level in politics and there was a student union. I became Head of that and it was a downward slope from there!

*For Craig, one thing politically lead to another.*

It happened organically, because I got interested and then I got more and more involved in the party. I was offered a job by Nick Bourne in Cardiff. I found myself in Cardiff and got captured by one of our Associations – Cardiff West. And all of a sudden people were looking around saying "there are young people here – what's going on? Why are you here?" And then suddenly the Chairman joins the conversation and grabs you saying we want you involved, we need young people. And then you find yourself in local elections especially, when people are looking for candidates in seats we can't win to have a go at and gain experience.

I stood against Rhodri Morgan in my first bash at the Assembly – so it wasn't one of our target seats! But I enjoyed it, and to be fair Rhodri was very good, seeing a young person in politics having a first bash at it. And I just enjoyed the debating, enjoyed going out meeting people, enjoyed all aspects of it.

*Youth, Craig explains, can be an opportunity.*

You stand out easily and quickly if you walk into any political meeting or environment. That presents you with opportunities because people want to help you get on, because they want you as the next generation taking over the party. Especially most of our associations they're always thinking "who am I going to pass on to, who's going to look after it after me?". And if you're the young person in the room, one of them grabs you.

So that's the opportunity, but equally everyone's always got an opinion and advice, which isn't a bad thing. But they've always got a very clear view on what you should be doing. That's what they expect you to do and you're always the dogsbody as you have to do all these things before everything else. So there are both opportunities and challenges.

I'm not sure if being given more time and respect is due to getting older or simply serving for a bit longer. Because when you come in to any new organisation in any walk of life you don't know the system, you don't know the correct procedures and you just have a bash at it. You learn what the correct things to do are and how to achieve something.

I think that when I served on the adult services Scrutiny Committee, I brought an extra dimension than perhaps the older councillors. However you don't want to be labelled that one who talks about young people's issues all the time. I'm very mindful that I come from a certain angle and a certain attitude and it's important that's voiced, but equally you're not going to get respect if you're jumping up and down about one issue. It's applying that perspective broadly, rather than just thinking

young people's issues apply only to young people's services, and that's the problem in councils too – young people use all the services.

*Finally, Craig reflects on why young people may be disengaged with politics.*

I think it's a generational thing – there are two or three generations. They're disengaged because their parents are. We're not dealing with the first generation of people disengaged with politics, We're dealing with the second, maybe the third generation who don't think politics works for them or their family or friends, or works in a practical way.

I had a very practical example of why I got involved – I saw a problem and saw it solved because of politics. But unless you see that, why on earth would you get involved?

You need to see a difference. And I think we're getting worse with it. Especially in Cardiff, you see endless consultation on everything. Consultations seem predetermined and I think that's terrible in politics because it just reaffirms what everyone believes which is – they don't listen to us. Politics needs to wake up and have proper consultations and referendums on issues – how many times did the EU referendum happen in Ireland to get the 'right' result – well that's not a referendum is it?



# Age and Welsh public life

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In a representative democracy, those elected should broadly reflect those who elected them. As our first Welsh Power Report: *Women in Public Life* showed, there is something wrong when women make up over half the population of Wales, yet over three quarters of local councillors are men.

Whilst expecting our political institutions to always be an exact carbon copy of the populations they serve is unrealistic, sustained historic inequalities should cause alarm.

Having a variety of ages around the decision-making table adds value to the political process. For a start, more views and experiences are included and heard. Different ages bring different perspectives on common problems. Younger people have different experiences and different needs. They use public services differently, and as citizens, have as much right to shape those services as people of other ages.

And whilst public bodies can put in place measures that involve young people more, there is no substitute in a representative democracy for having people of all ages in elected office.

Based on age, how representative are Wales' public bodies?

## The National Assembly and Westminster – Age representative: Yes or No?

There has been a trend in recent years for political parties to elect younger leaders. Nicola Sturgeon is the first head of government anywhere in the UK to be born in the 1970s. With the exception of Gordon Brown, the last four UK prime ministers all took office in their 40s.

When the leaders of the seven largest political parties in Great Britain lined-up for a televised debate, all bar one were in their 40s (and that one, Nigel Farage only just in his 50s). He would be joined by David Cameron (48), Natalie Bennett (48), Nick Clegg (47), Ed Miliband (44) Nicola Sturgeon (44), and Leanne Wood (43).

In Wales, all four party leaders in the Assembly are under 50. Carwyn Jones, currently 47 was elected as Bridgend AM at 32 and First Minister at 42. The leader of the opposition, Andrew RT Davies is younger than the First Minister as is Plaid's leader; and the Welsh Liberal Democrats' Kirsty Williams is younger still at 43, having been first elected party leader aged 37. That record was smashed in December 2014 when Kezia Dugdale was chosen as

Scottish Labour's deputy leader and the party's de facto leader of the opposition in Holyrood aged just 33.

But if our political leaders, like police officers, appear to be getting younger and younger, are our political institutions also becoming less dominated by older age groups? In short, no.

The National Assembly, first elected in 1999 with a fanfare for its record on gender equality and youthfulness is well known for becoming more male dominated, but it is also ageing. The average age of AMs elected for the first Assembly in 1999 was 47, 'maturing' to 50 in 2003 and 2007, and 54 in 2011. Incumbency is an obvious factor and as we approach the next set of elections for the fifth Assembly, more of the 1999 and 2003 intakes will retire, which could open up opportunities for younger successors.

The average age of AMs and MPs is 54 and 55 respectively; with 51 being the average age for successful candidates in both the 2010 general and 2011 assembly elections.

Figure 5: Age of AMs (at election & first elected)

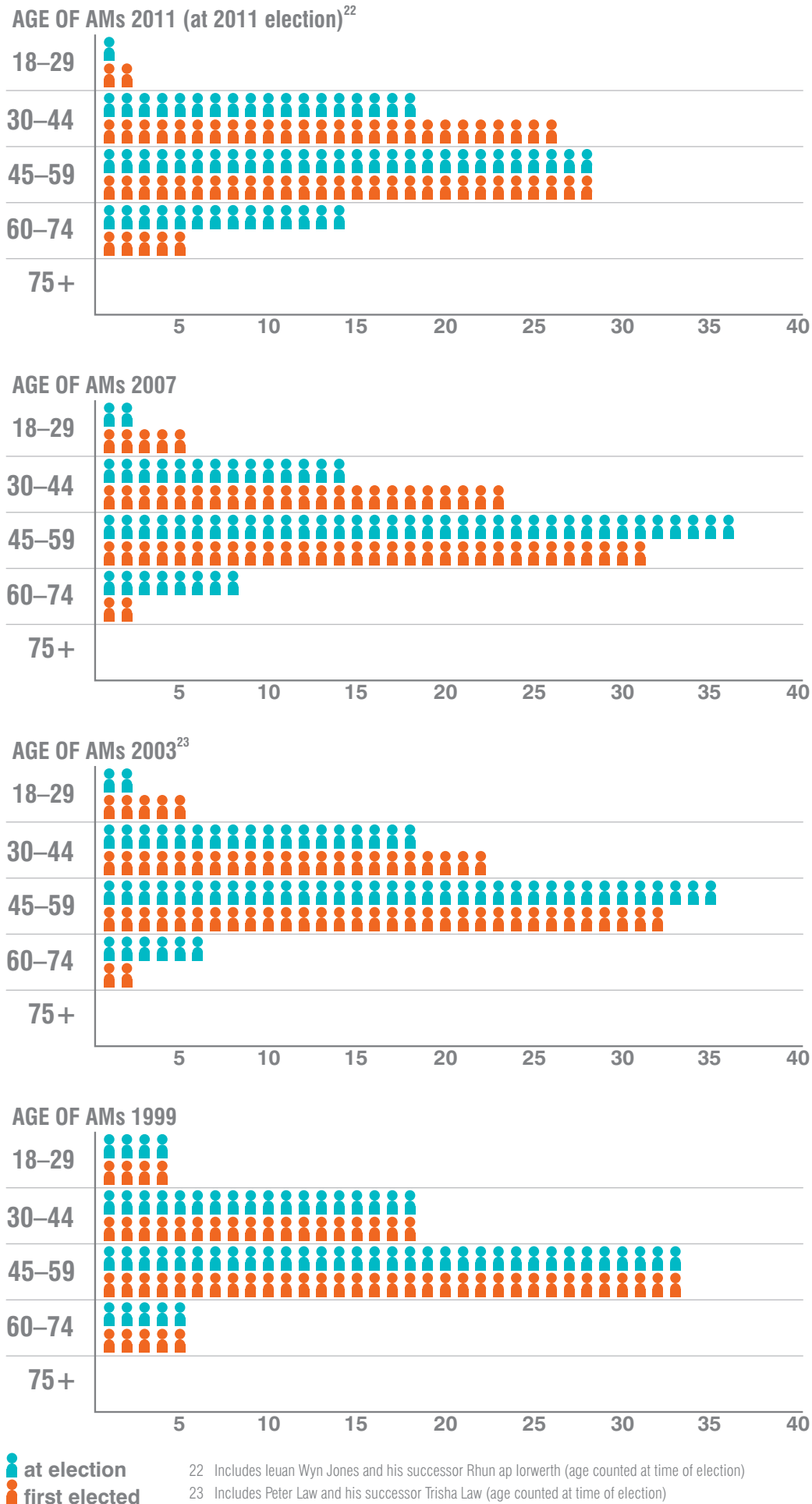
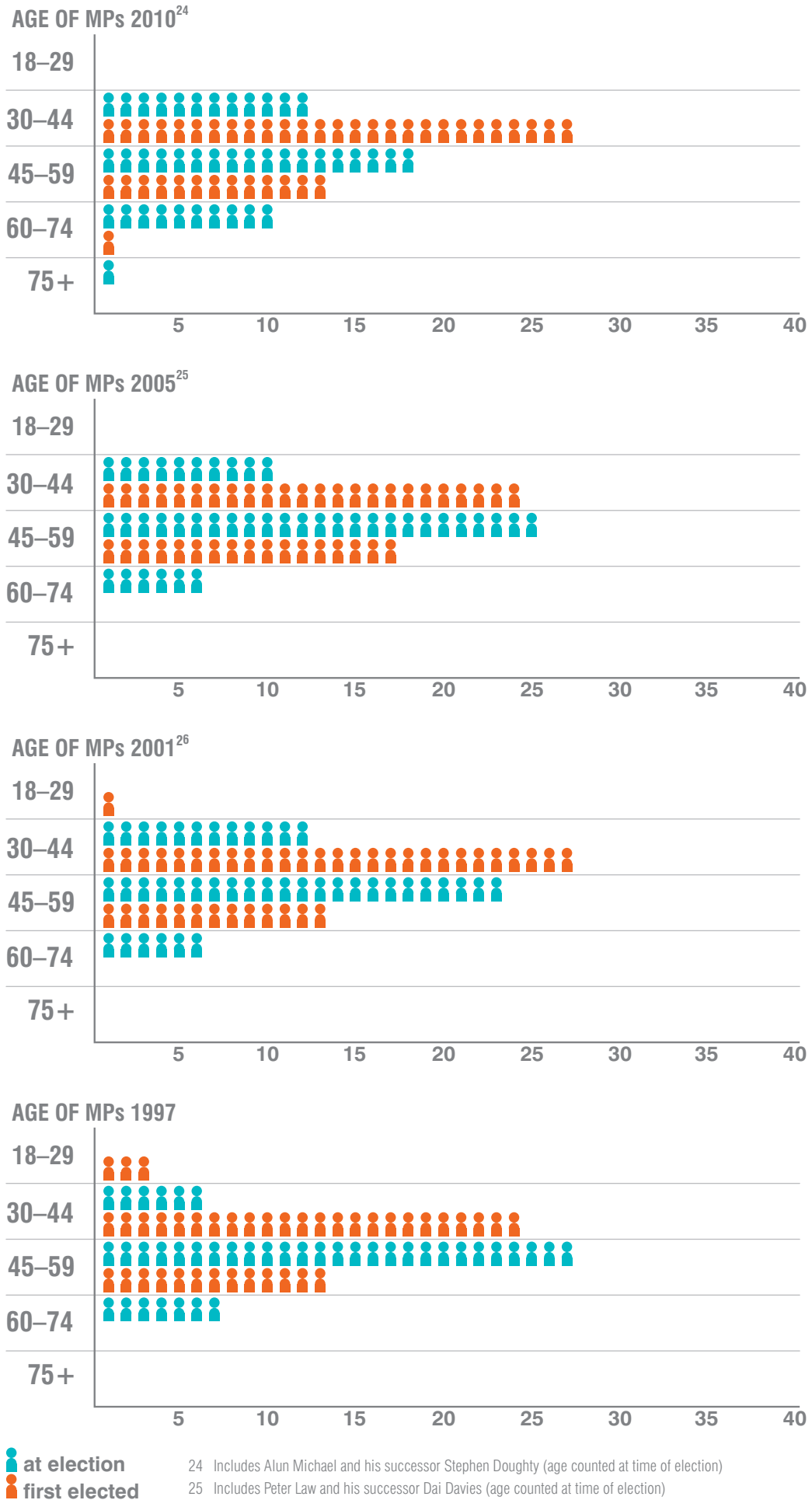


Figure 6: Age of MPs (at election & first elected)



## Local government – how does Wales compare with the rest of the UK?

While young people struggle to get a foot in the door at the National Assembly and Parliament, the real problem in Wales is local government. Whilst the former Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, blazed a trail in 1970, starting out as the UK's youngest local authority leader in Machen Urban District Council, the picture today across much of the country is one where representation remains overwhelmingly tilted away from young people.

The Expert Panel on Diversity in Local Government, chaired by Prof. Laura MacAllister, established that the average age of Welsh councillors was 60 years old<sup>27</sup>. In Wales, as in England, councillors are older on average than in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Both England and Wales still use First Past the Post to elect councillors, whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland have progressed to the Single Transferable Vote (STV). STV reduces significantly the number of safe seats and in Scotland has ensured no uncontested seats (unlike here in Wales, where over 96 candidates were elected unopposed in 2011 denying over 140,000 citizens a say at the ballot box).

STV makes elections more competitive, opening up opportunities for parties to promote younger candidates.

In Northern Ireland nearly one in five (17%), and in Scotland one in ten (9.9%) local councillors are aged 39 or under, compared to Wales with 6.8% and England 7.7%.

In the middle age band, Wales and England again trail Scotland and Northern Ireland. Just over a third of Welsh councillors and just under a third of English councillors are 'middle aged' (40-59), compared to under a half in Scotland (44.9%) and Northern Ireland (47%). Well over half of Welsh councillors are over 60 (56.8%), a figure similar in England (59.4%) whereas Scotland the proportion of over 60s is 45.2% and in Northern Ireland 34%.

The proportion of  
**WELSH** councillors  
 over the age of **70**  
 IS THE SAME as the  
 proportion  
 under **50**

<sup>27</sup> Expert Panel on Diversity, On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales (2014), available here: <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/localgov/140305-expert-group-report-en.pdf>



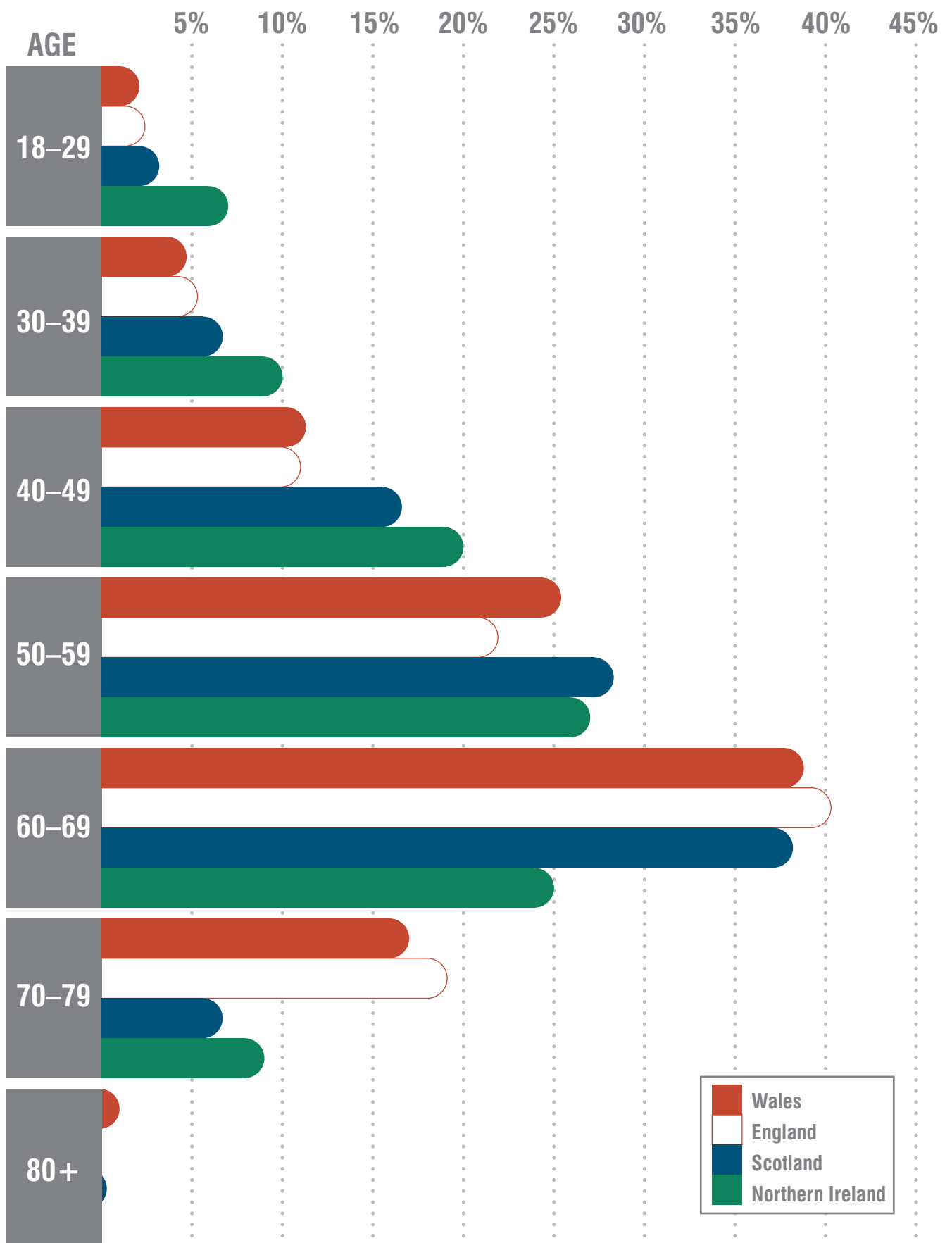


Figure 7: Age of Councillors across the United Kingdom

In November 2012, ERS Cymru also sent all 22 councils in Wales a Freedom of Information request, including a question on the age profiles of their councillors. 16 Councils responded, 3 of which did not have the data, or felt they could not release the data on age. However 13 councils did provide us with this data. While not exhaustive, 13 of 22 councils is a good sample, and with 779 councillors covered, this gives us a useful snapshot, covering almost two-thirds of councillors in Wales. The age profiles in this data are correct at December 2012.

It is clear that Welsh councillors tend to cluster around the age profile of 60-74. 46.6% of all councillors surveyed fall into this band. The next most common age profile is 45-59 years old, but only in Gwynedd Council does this age band overtake the 60-74 age band in term of the number of councillors in that age, although they are equal in number in Wrexham also.

It is when looking at the age ranges below 45 that we see how skewed the age profile is, with people under 45 constituting only 13.4% of the councillors in the councils surveyed. Those below 30 constitute only 3.3% of councillors. Given the difficulties of the current situation, and the need for difficult decisions to be made, this lack of younger representatives is worrying indeed.

While (naturally) getting older in age profile with more incumbency, the National Assembly has a wider age variation, with the numbers clustering around 45-59, but with a good proportion in the 30-44 age bracket, and with a large number having been elected in the 30-44 age bracket also. As with gender balance there appears to have been a relatively healthy age balance within the Assembly, although

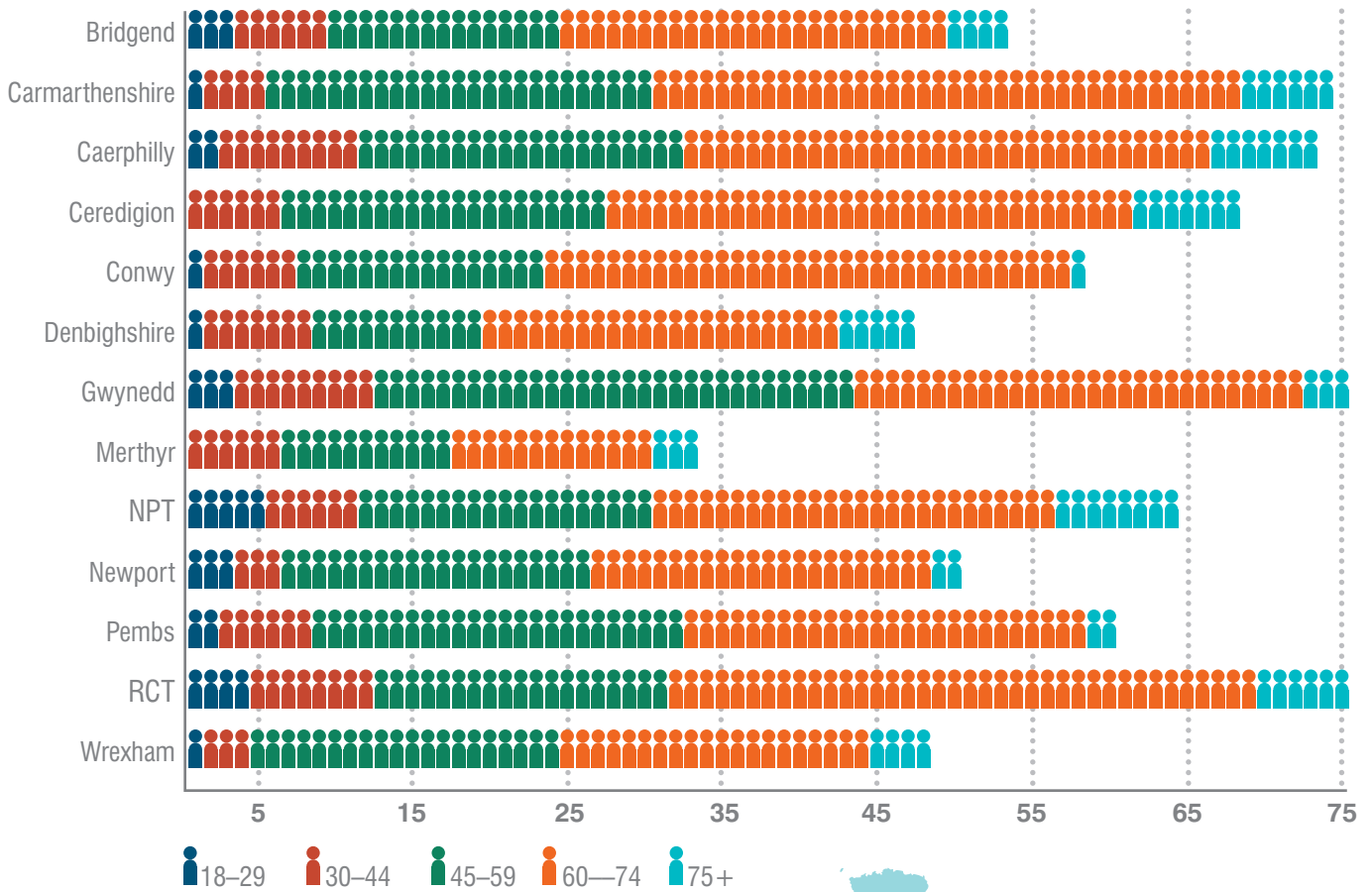
there should be no complacency. With only 60 Assembly Members, incumbency will have an effect, and also as AMs retire it is important to have candidates of different ages take their place.

Our data on local councils confirms further what we already know; they are overwhelmingly over 60, male and do not appear too welcoming to younger people. This may be because of this traditional view of local government, but equally it is unlikely that there are many younger people who want their foot in that particular door.

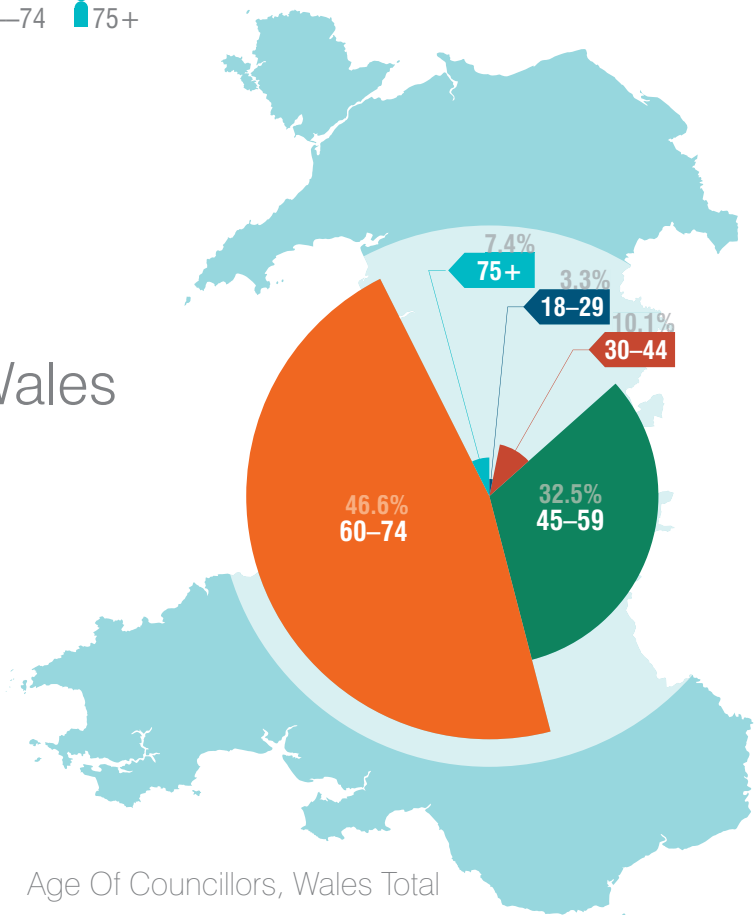
It is important that representative democracy at all levels should reflect the population it serves. While constraints mean that this will not be a perfect mirror it is important to the quality of decision making that the widest variety of experiences, outlooks and opinions are included. The lack of engagement of young people is a microcosm of the problem with our politics in its most acute form, and it is important that political parties and political institutions make sure that they are welcoming and encouraging of our young citizens.

Our following recommendations, ranging from teaching citizenship, to voter registration and political participation, are all aimed at building up the capacity of young people to feel able to engage in politics in the way they see fit. But in the end, it is vital that parties and political institutions, as our political gatekeepers, make sure that they bring young people fully into our political process.

Figure 8: Age Of Councillors, By Council



Just  
**3.3%**  
 of Councillors in Wales  
 are aged  
**under 30**



Age Of Councillors, Wales Total

# interview **Chris Evans**

For Chris Evans, it was a fateful trip a chip shop, that sparked his curiosity in politics and led to his election in 2010 as MP for Islwyn.

The interest in politics started when I was a kid. I was running down the hill to the chip shop and I got run over at the bottom of the hill. I ended up in hospital for six weeks. So I was reading comics, magazines whatever – I was only 13, 14 – and my mother came in with a book on JFK, ‘One Brief Shining Moment’ by William Manchester. I started reading that and became enthralled by the Kennedy myth. There was an energy around that period with Civil Rights for everyone, special privileges for none. I quite liked that idea, and was quite enamoured by his brother as well, this idea of putting a coalition together for Civil Rights.

Also I looked around my area – I grew up in the Rhondda – and it made me more aware of my own background. I could see people leaving school had no jobs, with heavy industry leaving and there was no future. What you saw being talked about in the press was yuppies and Del Boy and everything. It was so London-centric, and it seemed that we were forgotten about.

This idea that nothing ever changes and there’s a lack of political will, and lack of political energy: It was fighting that that got me into politics in the first place.

Most of what I learnt about politics was done in Ynyshir Library – which is now closed unfortunately – but I used to go there every Friday and I wanted to eat the books! I was a total geek about it from the age of 14-18, and absolutely loved it.

I don’t think anything gets done without community action or a group of people coming together. Nothing gets changed. If it’s all about the individual, then the individual usually is about their own selfish purposes. But I don’t think anyone is selfish. Inherently, all of us are social animals, we work together. When I joined the (Labour) party at that time, they said that; that we are stronger together than we are apart.

*After university, life moved on for Chris*

I started work after University and I sort of went off politics for a while. Then my father died when I was 27. I started looking around and thinking “we’re only here for a short amount of time”, so I started thinking about what can you do to improve the time you have here; I started thinking about getting into politics. I moved to Cheltenham with my job – I was a trade union official, and became a candidate in 2005 and that was the start.

I really, really, enjoyed being on the campaign trail and talking to people, people who didn’t have the same perspective I had. I’ve lived in the Valleys all my life and most people have, whether a Nationalist or a member of Labour party, an element of socialism that runs through there. So it was good to go (somewhere different) and put my view over, and become stronger in my views as well.

I came back to South Wales and started working with Don (Touhig). I thoroughly loved working for Don, and Don’s a great friend of mine, a great mentor. I got close to him and close in seeing how he did the job and all the people he helped day by day. When Don stepped down I felt I’d served my apprenticeship and was ready to be a Member of Parliament and a good Member of Parliament as well.

*When asked whether he’d encountered problems because of his age, Chris explained how he’d learnt to deal with the issue.*

I’m the 64th youngest Member of Parliament – so there’s a lot of young people in Parliament anyway. Parliament feels a lot younger than it did in 2005-2010. So there’s not really any issue there.

Most of the community groups I visit, I am usually 30 years younger than them! The thing is not to look frivolous, to be serious, and – I know it sounds odd – always dress in a suit so you look like a Member of Parliament rather than someone who’s rolling off the street.

I think the most important thing when I’m going around schools is to show that I speak with a Valleys accent, I’m from the Valleys, if I can do it, anybody can. The important thing I find is that in the Valleys there’s a poverty of ambition. I think if they see someone with a Valleys accent, born in the Valleys, that can go to Parliament, that’s really important. And also to realise that I’m just a bloke, no different to anybody else, I think that’s really important as well.

*Chris went on to outline how he’d get more young people involved in politics.*

First of all, legislation should say that you’re taught politics from the age of 11. People should understand the political system, what a Member of Parliament and Assembly Member is. Also, people should understand that politics happens to you every day of the week. I think we need that in school, and politics should be taught at GCSE level, and should be an option for GCSEs.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Votes at 16

- Parliament should lower the voting age to 16 for all UK-wide elections;
- Parliament should devolve power to the National Assembly to alter the voting age for all Wales-only elections;
- The National Assembly should lower the voting age for all Welsh elections (Assembly, local and Wales-only referendums) ahead of the 2016 Assembly elections;
- Welsh Government should work with Wales' Local Authorities, Local Education Authorities and Wales' Regional Educational Consortia to develop a robust system through which schools, further education colleges and universities undertake voter registration drives for young people.

## Political Education and Citizenship in Schools

### Existing curricula and Pupil Participation

- Insofar as possible, schools should ensure that PSE is effectively prioritised and resourced, as it can be beneficial to a whole school approach to citizenship education. This can lead to PSE as an important fulcrum between the curriculum needs and the wellbeing needs of pupils and can lead to both aspects of school life being mutually reinforcing.
- The Welsh Government should commission Estyn to specifically review whether the curriculum provides sufficient rigour and opportunity for pupils and young people to develop an effective understanding of democracy in Wales. The review should be adapted to the developing Donaldson agenda. In order to track progress over the long term, five year review cycles should be established following the Assembly elections in 2016.

### School Councils

- The roles and responsibilities of school councils should be placed on a statutory basis. This would ensure an increased understanding of the role of school councils and the part they can play to enhance the school experience and pupils' well-being.
- Welsh Government should extend their guidance on school councils, and update and develop the information on the Pupils Voice Wales website as a single portal of information for teachers.
- Welsh Government to consider the role school councils can provide to help increase voter registration as peer groups.

### Donaldson Review

- Welsh Government to endorse Donaldson's vision for the purpose of the Welsh curriculum, and in particular in creating 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world'.
- The recommendations above should be adopted within the Donaldson framework and agenda as it develops.

## National Youth Assembly for Wales

- A National Youth Assembly for Wales should be established, with its powers and constitution enshrined in statute.
- The National Youth Assembly for Wales should be designed by young people, led by young people and be for the benefit of young people. It should be totally youth-led including at Trustee level. This will help ensure that the body listens to and recognises the issues that are most important to young people, and ensures that by representing them at a national level their voices are heard by government and decision makers.
- The National Youth Assembly for Wales should be accountable to the National Assembly corporate body for its decisions and performance, with the Assembly to scrutinise its performance based on its success in promoting young peoples' issues and in getting young people to take part.
- The National Youth Assembly for Wales should be accountable to the National Assembly as a whole for its funding.
- A statutory duty should be placed on every local authority to establish a County Youth Council, with a youth mayor. The Youth Council and Mayor should have a statutory right to be consulted on any matter it sees fit. The Welsh Government's future legislation on local democracy and community engagement, based on the Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper should enshrine this in statute.
- Every local authority should enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in their constitutions, following the model of a council constitution to be adopted based on the Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper.

## Youth and Political Parties

- Parties should take steps to ensure that steps are taken to achieve targets aimed at getting a more diverse group of councillors. These targets should include a wider age-range (following the Expert Panel on Diversity's recommendations).
- Where opportunities are available, parties should look to ensure a more diverse age range of AMs.



# Case study

## Political Education and Pupils' Participation in Sandfields School, Port Talbot.

Sandfields School has a dedicated PSE department, with a specialist Head of Department Miss Annette Stead. Rather than dispersing the responsibilities of PSE between different teachers, this means the Head is evaluated on performance as any other department would be.

It also means that a teacher is more likely to be able and comfortable in teaching complex ideas. PSE must be able to react to topical issues, so being comfortable and knowledgeable in a subject area is important. At Sandfields, for example, they discussed the role of NATO when the summit was held in Newport.

Given that PSE covers such complex teaching areas as Sexual Health, Drugs and Politics, the need for specialist teachers who are comfortable in teaching these subjects is key. As Miss Stead noted, in terms of political knowledge:

*"Some pupils haven't heard of the Welsh Assembly. If their family don't know much about it themselves this isn't a normal part of their lives, it's only in the lessons they have from me, from school, from primaries, that these issues would be raised. They don't have that basic knowledge to hook on to develop the idea of politics.*

*"So the challenge is to get that for them, to get it into a method they*

*can understand. One of the best examples I can give you is the task I do – to explain how politics is organised, and people within politics, I try to give them something they can understand it's the same as. So I'll give them a grid and I'll tell them "well, you've got your Prime Minister, you've got your Assembly, and you've got citizens, the EU. Who is like the Prime Minister in our school?" – Well it's like the Head. Who is like parliament – it's a bit like the governors, and so on. The School Council equates to somebody that's checking up on the government so it helps them understand that."*

The analogy with the School as Democracy stretches beyond example into practical activity. While often lacking the basic knowledge of 'formal' politics, the School Council and PSE allows pupils to participate in school decisions, giving pupils a strong base in citizenship and political skills:

*"with the School Council, they do appreciate it and do understand. It improves wellbeing because it gives pupils a voice. They know they can raise things, get things moving and changing. And it's a community based area... So although (formal) political awareness they find hard, because their knowledge is lower, their actual awareness of themselves*



*and making changes happen in the school is better, as it's more for their own school as it's all to do with their community. This school has been on the estate for 50 years. It's a large council area of the estate, community events are organised here, and it's hired out. I think that all makes a difference really."*

Over the past few years the School Council has had strong input in:

- Organising the toilets to be painted with murals, including discussions with a local artist on what pupils want;
- Lobbying for funds for a lift to be installed so that pupils with mobility disabilities could access the library on the 2nd floor, where one of the most popular club meetings were held. The lift has now been installed at a cost of approx. £70-80,000;
- Delegates from School Council interview new staff candidates;
- leading a morning assembly to explain what the new pupils' wellbeing framework meant for pupils themselves;
- Exchanges with other School Councils to share good practice.

Moreover, the School is moving to a new build in the next 18 months, and it is expected that the School Council will play a central part in that process. They're involved to the extent that they will have meetings with the architects and planners.

In terms of linking both the academic and wellbeing aspects of school life, the model PSE followed allows for pupils' voices to be built into both Curriculum education and Pastoral Education and to be mutually reinforcing. The PSE model uses surveys of pupils and the advantages of being close to

pupils' views for 'intelligence-gathering' on the ground to help pick up on anything that's wrong and needs addressing. So increased student voice becomes normalised throughout the school system, helps make the school community happier in terms of wellbeing, which in turn is likely to make students – and the school – perform better academically.

*"It's twofold, as you get the School Council but you also get the (PSE & Careers) Guidance lessons. So they all see me once a week. So for example, within the PSE work when I do bullying in the lessons, I'll also ask pupils to create their own webpage for the school, and in that write down any problems they think the school has got and I'll then feed any problems raised to the Assistant head myself. I'll do surveys to find out who's a young carer in year 7.*

*"So it's really a strength of these PSE lessons and having a lead in the department. In a school you have a curriculum side and a pastoral side – looking after pupils' wellbeing – and I feed into both. I'll sit on curriculum planning meetings and I'll sit on Pupil wellbeing achievement meetings. So I can triangulate them and the head can come to me and say can you do this, there's a problem with this can you survey the pupils and so on. And that happens in the lessons as well."*

Thus, the PSE department acts as a nexus linking together different aspects of school policy, providing for better political education, and supporting the participation of students and School Council. This increased pupil voice in turn provides an avenue for students to develop their citizenship skills, as well as to quell grievances, and provide extra fail-safes for problem behaviour which is more likely to bring to light potentially difficult issues.

# Case study

## Bite the Ballot – A party neutral, not-for-profit community interest company set up to get young people engaged in politics.<sup>28</sup>

### *Can you explain what BTB does?*

Born in a classroom three weeks before the 2010 general election, Bite The Ballot (BTB) was sparked by the experiences and frustrations of (staff and) students who, until then, hadn't made the link between the issues they cared about and democratic participation.

Today, BTB is a national movement, running UK-wide voter registration and democratic engagement campaigns, reforming the law to revitalise British democracy and are seeking to bring digital, democratic engagement to the forefront of political conscious. Our core values when engaging those furthest away from politics are to be unconventional, inclusive and bold; three words you may not associate with contemporary 'politics'.

Our approach to voter and democratic engagement is on three levels: at a grassroots level, a digital level and a policy level.

Using our digital learning resources ('The Basics'), featuring celebs, idols and influencers, we demystify the registration process and push the simple, but powerful, message that people aged 16-25 are 'votes

worth winning'. We take these resources into schools, colleges and youth clubs all around the country. These sessions are often led by BTB Community Engagement Officers (CEOs). CEOs are our grassroots network of people that work alongside election teams in local authorities with the task of registering and inspiring young voters in their local area.

Digitally, we seek to both continue and enhance the democratic journey of people (after an initial spark of inspiration) via an issue-based, youth-led, YouTube channel BITE News, organising projects such as #LeadersLive and creating issue-based 'mockumentaries'. We are also in the process of creating a voter advice application ('VAA') to help voters compare and contrast parties' and leaders' policies and manifesto commitments.

From a policy perspective, we encourage politicians to understand the importance of the youth vote, and the significance of making policies with people aged 16-24 in mind. We also have a list of policy recommendations ('It's not rocket science') that aim to combat the alarmingly low levels of registration

and disengagement amongst people aged 16-24. Recently, BTB endeavoured to bring easier, more accessible and engaging voter registration to the UK via amendments to the Wales Bill. We are also sponsoring Private Members' Bills in the Houses of Lords and Commons.

#TheAmendment campaign (which sought to improve the Wales Bill) drew inspiration from innovative and proven electoral registration methods from across the world. First, in building upon the 'Schools Initiative' programme in Northern Ireland, we argued that a statutory obligation on EROs in Wales to go into local schools and colleges to host or facilitate 'voter engagement sessions' could be massively successful in boosting the registration rates of attainers. This is Labour and Liberal Democrat policy. Second, drawing inspiration from the USA 'Motor Voter' Act 1993, we sought to introduce 'tick-box' registration to Wales, which, in essence, would enable individuals to register when interacting with government bodies (e.g. driver's licence applications). The campaign was backed by all of the main Welsh leaders, the Assembly, the Assembly Presiding Officer, the Church in Wales and a whole host of youth, democracy and civil society organisations. Due to opposition in the UK Government, the campaign will now move to the Assembly and to each of the twenty-two Welsh authorities.

In addition, we act as the Secretariat of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Voter Registration which allows us to scrutinise the bodies charged with overseeing voter registration, such as the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office, as well develop and evaluate policies in the UK Parliament.

#### *What are BTB's goals?*

BTB is on a mission to make history: we want to bring about the largest turnout of people aged 18-24s ever in the 2015 general election (at least 71%). Given the record-breaking participation levels in the Scottish Independence

Referendum, we believe society is perfectly poised to make this a reality.

With only 51% of 16 and 17 year olds currently registered to vote and only 24% of people aged 16-24 likely to turnout on polling day, BTB aims to tackle the UK democratic crisis, head on.

#### *How do you get young people involved, and how are they involved in your decision-making processes?*

Our organisation exists solely to get people aged 16-24 interested and involved in democracy. Therefore, in order to keep our message and brand in line with this demographic, we listen closely to our Board. The Board is made up of 16-24s that have been with BTB since its creation. The Board are heavily involved with decision-making and meet regularly to hold the organisation's directors to account and ensure the effective continuation of BTB's goals.

In addition, we carried out an extensive survey of over 5,000 people aged 16-24 in 2012 – entitled 'My Manifesto' – in which we asked people about the issues they cared about and the policies they wanted to see put in place. This survey has subsequently formed the basis of all of our policy recommendations to the UK parties for the upcoming 2015 general election manifestos.

We relied heavily on an army of young volunteers on the inaugural National Voter Registration Day 2014, on which we registered an approximate 50,625 people in one day – indeed, some of our volunteers were not even old enough to register themselves.

#### *How have young people reacted to BTB?*

Politics, more specifically, Westminster-style party politics, is generally met with disinterest, disgust or disdain by people we meet across the UK. BTB, however, is proud to 'do politics differently'. We're not afraid to call out politicians, Departments, civil servants or NGOs. It is this, coupled with our issue-based approach, that

sparks an immediate understanding between BTB and the people we seek to interact with. We utilise social media, the home of many 16-24 year olds, for change; best exemplified by our most recent project, Leaders Live, which has trended on Twitter each time we've organised one of these leader's policy discussions. This allows for a tangible move away from the formal and traditional image of 'politics' as we break down barriers between those initially skeptical of politics, but who care about political issues.

At the start of a BTB school, college or youth club session, most, if not all, the young people in the room are not registered to vote; nor are they interested in registering. By the end of the 45 minute session, we usually get a 100% registration rate. Given the success of these sessions, we believe that all local authorities' EROs should take our lead and run similar sessions in their local schools and colleges. This is our key 'ask' in both our amendment to the Wales Bill and our Voter Registration Private Members' Bills.

#### *What's been BTB's impact and main achievements?*

BTB's main achievement to date is the registration of around 50,625 people on NVRD 2014 at a cost of 25p per registration; roughly 100 times more cost effective than the Electoral Commission. Through various activities throughout the year, we have added significantly to this number of registered individuals, but our true grassroots impact will best be measured in run up to, and participation in, the 2015 general election.

BTB's cross-party amendments to the Wales Bill secured all-party support in the Welsh Assembly and has been incredibly well received. Consequently, we are hopeful that we have a real chance of bringing easier, more accessible and engaging voter registration to Wales by now working with AMs, EROs and Welsh campaigning groups. We believe that this is an enormous achievement and (in

building on the success of the schemes in Northern Ireland) we hope to use Wales as a trailblazer for democracy across the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, securing debates with seven of the UK political party leaders and potential young voters – live-streamed on YouTube in association with Twitter UK ('Leaders Live') – has been a massive achievement for BTB. Not only is it a national first, but it has allowed young people to engage with politicians directly about issues that affect on a platform they relate to. The impact of #LeadersLive cannot be quantified as it is still on-going, however, we anticipate that it will reach thousands of potential voters; and inspire many more.

#### *What are BTB's plans for the future?*

Our plan is to make history in the UK. We want to register and inspire the turnout of the largest number of 18-24s ever (taking the lead from the February 1974 general election, which had a 70% turnout of 18-24s).

We plan to do this through expanding our 'on-the-ground' network of CEOs, maximising our digital presence and ensuring that all political parties include both 'youth-friendly' and genuine democratic reform policies in their manifestos. Furthermore, we will also work alongside a huge and ever-growing list of organisations to ensure as many people are engaged and inspired to register and vote – culminating in a week of registration activities around 5 February 2015 (#NVRD 2015).

Long-term, we want to ensure that this generation, and all future generations, are engaged and inspired to become active citizens, make their voices heard and may truly shape the future of our country.



# Appendices

The following Tables show the full data used in Figures 1–8 throughout this publication

Group	Completeness
Average (total population)	86%
Young people aged 17-18	55%
Young people aged 19-24	56%
Private renters (all ages)	56%
EU nationals (all ages)	56%
Irish and Commonwealth nationals (all ages)	68%
BME groups (all ages)	77%
Social renters (all ages)	78%

Figure 1: Registration levels by group (UK, 2013)

Age Group	Completeness
16-17	51%
18-19	76%
20-24	70%
25-34	74%
35-44	85%
45-54	91%
55-64	93%
65+	95%

Figure 2: Registration levels by age (UK, 2014)

Age	Certainty to vote
18-24	24%
25-34	35%
35-44	42%
45-55	57%
55-64	60%
65-74	64%
75+	67%

Figure 3a: Certainty to vote (by age, UK, 2014)

Age	Duty to vote
18-24	46%
25-34	60%
35-44	61%
45-54	70%
55-64	78%
65-74	79%
75+	77%

Figure 3b: Duty to vote by age (by age, UK, 2014)

	1964	1966	1970	F1974	01974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
18-24	76.4	60.5	64.9	70.2	62.5	62.5	63.9	66.6	67.3	54.1	40.4	38.2	51.8
25-34	70.7	70.8	66.5	77.2	69.0	72.4	67.6	74.0	77.3	62.2	45.0	47.7	57.3
35-44	79.5	80.0	72.8	78.7	73.9	76.3	76.2	74.9	78.3	70.2	55.7	61.6	64.4
45-54	79.1	79.8	74.9	73.1	76.6	81.2	77.6	79.9	81.8	76.4	63.2	65.5	67.5
55-64	78.4	78.0	74.1	82.2	76.6	81.4	77.2	78.9	78.1	79.9	64.0	72.6	69.8
65+	76.7	75.9	77.2	79.2	76.0	77.7	73.1	76.0	79.2	77.7	70.1	74.3	74.7
ALL	77.1	75.8	72.0	78.8	72.8	76.0	72.7	75.3	77.7	71.4	59.4	61.3	65.0

Figure 4: Table showing turn-out rates in (18-24 versus general population)

Year	Turnout 65+ (registered voter)	Turnout 18-24 (registered voters)	Turnout Gap
1970			18
2005	75%	37%	40
2010	76%	44%	32

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	1	2
30-44	18	26
45-59	28	28
60-74	14	5
75+	0	0

AMs 2011 (at 2011 election)

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	2	5
30-44	14	23
45-59	36	31
60-74	8	2
75+	0	0

AMs 2007

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	2	5
30-44	18	22
45-59	35	32
60-74	6	2
75+	0	0

AMs 2003

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	4	4
30-44	18	18
45-59	33	33
60-74	5	5
75+	0	0

AMs 1999

Figure 5: Age of AMs (at election & first elected)

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	0	0
30-44	12	27
45-59	18	13
60-74	10	1
75+	1	0

MPs 2010

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	0	0
30-44	10	24
45-59	25	17
60-74	6	0
75+	0	0

MPs 2005

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	0	1
30-44	12	27
45-59	23	13
60-74	6	0
75+	0	0

MPs 2001

Age	At Election	First Elected
18-29	0	3
30-44	6	24
45-59	27	13
60-74	7	0
75+	0	0

MPs 1997

Figure 6: Age of MPs (at election &amp; first elected)

Age	Wales	England	Scotland	N. Ireland
18-29	2.1%	2.4%	3.2%	7%
30-39	4.7%	5.3%	6.7%	10%
40-49	11.3%	11%	16.6%	20%
50-59	25.4%	21.9%	28.3%	27%
60-69	38.8%	40.3%	38.2%	25%
70-79	17%	19.1%	6.7%	9%
80+	1%		0.3%	

Figure 7: Age of councillors across the United Kingdom



Individual Councils	18-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75+	Total
Bridgend	3	6	15	25	4	53
%	5.7	11.3	28.3	47.2	7.5	
Carmarthenshire	1	4	25	38	6	74
%	1.4	5.4	33.8	51.4	8.1	
Caerphilly	2	9	21	34	7	73
%	2.7	12.3	28.8	46.6	9.6	
Ceredigion	0	6	21	34	7	68
%	0	8.8	30.9	50	10.3	
Conwy	1	6	16	35	1	59
%	1.7	10.2	27.1	59.3	1.7	
Denbighshire	1	7	11	23	5	47
%	2.1	14.9	23.4	48.9	10.6	
Gwynedd	3	9	31	29	3	75
%	4	12	41.3	38.6	4	
Merthyr	0	6	11	13	3	33
%	0	18.2	33.3	39.4	9.1	
NPT	5	6	19	26	8	64
%	7.8	9.4	29.7	40.6	12.5	
Newport	3	3	20	22	2	50
%	6	6	40	44	4	
Pembrokeshire	2	6	24	26	2	60
%	3.3	10	40	43.3	3.3	
RCT	4	8	19	38	6	75
%	5.3	10.7	25.3	50.7	8	
Wrexham	1	3	20	20	4	48
%	2.1	6.2	41.7	41.7	8.3	
TOTAL	26	79	253	363	58	779
%	3.3	10.1	32.5	46.6	7.4	

Figure 8: Age of councillors, by council





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