

Call for an early Senedd election

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 2 Rhagfyr 2024
Petitions Committee | 2 December 2024

Reference: SR24/9547/10

Petition Number: P-06-1466

Petition title: Call for an early Senedd election

Text of petition: Now there is a new "unelected" First Minister running Wales the public should have the right to vote for who they want running the country.



1. Background

Any Member of the Senedd can be appointed as First Minister of Wales. There is no requirement for a Senedd election to take place if the First Minister leaves their post unless the Senedd does not nominate a new First Minister within 28 days of the office becoming vacant.

1.1. Nomination of a First Minister

Section 47 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 states that the Senedd must nominate a Member of the Senedd for appointment as First Minister in the event of any of the following:

- a. the holding of a poll at a Senedd general election;
- b. the Senedd resolving that the Welsh Ministers no longer enjoy the confidence of the Senedd;
- c. the First Minister tendering resignation to His Majesty;
- d. the First Minister dying or becoming permanently unable to act and to tender resignation; or
- e. the First Minister ceasing to be a Member of the Senedd otherwise than by reason of a dissolution.

Following the resignation of Mark Drakeford MS as First Minister on 19 March 2024, the Senedd voted on 20 March 2024 to nominate Vaughan Gething MS as First Minister.

Similarly, following Vaughan Gething MS's resignation as First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS was nominated by the Senedd to become First Minister on 6 August 2024.

1.2. Senedd Elections

1.2.a. Ordinary General Elections

Section 3 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 ("GoWA") provides for 'ordinary' general elections to be held for the Senedd on the first Thursday in May every five

calendar years. This can be varied by up to one month before or after to avoid a clash with UK Parliament general election

The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 will change the period between Senedd general elections to every four years.

1.2.b. Extraordinary General Elections

As set out in section 5 of GoWA, there are two circumstances where ‘extraordinary’ general elections (i.e. an early election) can be held for the Senedd:

- In the event that at least two-thirds of the total number of Members vote in favour of a motion that the Senedd is to be dissolved; or
- In the event that the Senedd is unable to appoint a First Minister within 28 days of either a general election or the office of First Minister becoming vacant (for example, by the Senedd resolving to no longer have confidence in the First Minister or the First Minister tending their resignation).

If either of these circumstances were to occur, the Presiding Officer would be required to propose a day for the holding of an extraordinary general election.

If an extraordinary general election is held within six months of the next scheduled ordinary general election, that ordinary general election would not need to be held. For example, if an extraordinary general election was held after 7 November 2025, the next scheduled ordinary general election on Thursday 7 May 2026 would not be held.

2. Welsh Government action

On 6 August 2024, the Senedd nominated Eluend Morgan MS to become First Minister of Wales.

The First Minister appointed her new Cabinet on 11 September 2024 and set out the Welsh Government’s priorities in an oral statement to the Senedd on 17 September 2024.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.