

Residency requirement for Senedd election candidates

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 15 Tachwedd 2021
Petitions Committee | 15 November 2021

Reference: SR21/837-12

Petition Number: P-06-1185

Petition title: Introduce a minimum 3 year residency requirement for all Senedd Election candidates

Text of petition:

There have been several high profile cases of Senedd candidates standing or being elected, despite having never lived in Wales.

We propose Elected members of the Senedd should be required to have lived in Wales for a minimum of 3 years prior to candidacy, in order that they understand the communities they seek to represent.

We believe parachuting of candidates from outside of Wales, into the Senedd, undermines the quality and integrity of Welsh politics and must be prevented.



1. Candidates for 2021 Senedd Election

The petitioner references *'several high profile cases of Senedd candidates standing or being elected, despite having never lived in Wales'*.

It was reported that at least 23 candidates standing in the May 2021 Senedd general election were not resident in Wales. Only one elected Member of the Senedd is reported as having 'admitted to living outside Wales' during the Fifth Senedd.

'Parachuting' candidates is an expression used to describe the practice of standing political candidates in constituencies or regions with which they do not necessarily have a connection.

2. No residency requirement for candidates

To stand as a candidate in a Senedd general election, a person must:

- be at least 18 years old,
- be a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a qualifying foreign citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of the European Union who is resident in the United Kingdom; and
- not be disqualified by virtue of their job, bankruptcy or imprisonment.

There is no requirement in law for a candidate to be a resident and registered elector in Wales.

3. Competence to implement a residency requirement

The Senedd has legislative competence in relation to certain elements of devolved elections under the Government of Wales Act 2006 (as amended by the Wales Act 2017).

Standing requirements for candidates at Senedd elections is not expressly reserved under Schedule 7A to the Government of Wales Act 2006.

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