Welsh Government:
A quick guide
Who makes up the Welsh Government?

The Welsh Government consists of:
- The First Minister
- Welsh Ministers
- Deputy Welsh Ministers
- The Counsel General

The First Minister of Wales is the head of the Welsh Government. The First Minister and Welsh Ministers together form the Cabinet.

The Welsh Government is responsible for proposing and implementing policy and laws which would apply in Wales and which aim to improve the lives of everyone in Wales. It is supported by staff based in offices throughout Wales.

What is the Welsh Government responsible for?

The Welsh Government is responsible for many areas of our daily life in Wales.

These devolved areas include:
- education
- health
- local government
- transport
- planning
- economic development
- social care
- culture
- environment
- agriculture and rural affairs

The role of the Welsh Government is to:
- Make decisions on matters regarding these areas, for Wales as a whole;
- Develop policies and implement them;
- Develop Welsh Laws

The UK government continues to have overall responsibility for some public services in Wales, for example police, prisons and the justice system, defence, national security and foreign affairs.
Who’s who?

Carwyn Jones – First Minister of Wales
Leighton Andrews – Minister for Public Services
Mark Drakeford – Minister for Health and Social Services
Rebecca Evans – Deputy Minister for Farming and Food
Vaughan Gething – Deputy Minister for Health
Lesley Griffiths – Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
Edwina Hart – Minister for Economy, Science and Transport
Jane Hutt – Minister for Finance and Government Business
Julie James – Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology
Huw Lewis – Minister for Education and Skills
Carl Sargeant – Minister for Natural Resources
Ken Skates – Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism
Theodore Huckle – The Counsel General for Wales
Political parties produce manifestos and campaign across Wales.

Election takes place.

Political party with most Assembly Members forms the government. This is called a majority government.

or

If no overall majority, parties combine to form a coalition government.

or

A minority government in which the party with the largest number of seats forms a government although it does not have an absolute majority over all the other parties together.
Carwyn Jones is the First Minister of Wales.

His responsibilities include:

- Appointing the Cabinet of Welsh Ministers, Deputy Ministers and the Counsel General with the approval of Her Majesty the Queen
- Leading policy development and delivery
- The Welsh language
- Managing relationships with the rest of the UK and internationally
- Representing the people of Wales at major events
- The legislative programme

e-mail: carwyn.jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Leighton Andrews is the Minister for Public Services.

His responsibilities include:
- Public sector reform and delivery
- Funding local councils and police authorities
- Local authority performance
- Improvement of public services
- Community safety including counter terrorism issues
- The Fire and Rescue Services
- Liaison with Police Authorities
- Justice policy, including youth justice

e-mail: correspondence.leighton.andrews@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Health and Social Services

Mark Drakeford is the Minister for Health and Social Services.

His responsibilities include:
All aspects of the:

- National Health Service Wales
- Public health and health protection in Wales
- Dentistry
- Substance misuse
- Charges for NHS services
- Postgraduate medical education in Wales
- Provision of services in Wales for the mentally ill
- Adoption and fostering services
- Older People’s Commissioner for Wales
- Food Standards Agency Wales

e-mail: correspondence.mark.drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Rebecca Evans is the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food.

Her responsibilities include:

- Supporting Welsh farmers
- Ensuring good standards of health and welfare for animals
- Enhancing the social and economic well being of rural communities
- Promotion of food from Wales
- The protection of wildlife in Wales
- Agriculture sector development, including wages and skills;
- Livestock identification and movement policy

e-mail: correspondence.rebecca.evans@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Health

Vaughan Gething is the Deputy Minister for Health.

His responsibilities include:

- Day to day oversight of all aspects of NHS Wales, including:
- Performance against tier one targets, which include referral to treatment times, cancer, cardiac, delayed transfers of care, accident and emergency, ambulance response times, public health and mental health indicators;
- Delivery of the new outcome measures;
- Delivery plans excluding the completion of the primary care delivery plan;
- Scrutiny of NHS organisations’ performance against their three-year plans;
- Performance meetings with health board and NHS trust chairs and vice chairs;
- Regular meetings with senior officials to discuss aspects of performance, for example, meeting those responsible for delivering referral to treatment times at the health boards to discuss improvements.

e-mail: correspondence.vaughan.gething@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Communities and Tackling Poverty

Lesley Griffiths is the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.

Her responsibilities include:

- Equality and Equal Opportunities
- The voluntary sector and volunteering in Wales
- Communities First
- Dealing with the impact of welfare reform
- Financial inclusion, including credit unions
- Children’s Commissioner for Wales
- Parenting programmes
- Housing-related activities of local authorities and housing associations
- Homelessness
- Strategic Regeneration Areas and legacy regeneration
- The regulation of commercial tenancies let by local authorities

e-mail: correspondence@lesley.griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Edwina Hart is the Minister for Economy Science and Transport.

Her responsibilities include:

- Promoting Wales for business investment
- Supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise
- Support and advice for businesses in Wales
- Transport policy
- Promoting Welsh trade overseas
- Science policy
- Road safety

e-mail: correspondence.edwina.hart@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Finance and Government Business

Jane Hutt is the Minister for Finance and Government Business.

Her responsibilities include:

- Making most effective use of the Welsh Government’s budget
- Planning for future spending
- Wales Census
- Publishing facts and statistics on the finances of the Welsh Government
- Development of a Welsh Treasury
- Strategic communications
- Policy and administration of European Union Structural funds
- Matters affecting Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies
- Managing Welsh Government Business in the National Assembly for Wales

e-mail: correspondence.jane.hutt@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Skills and Technology

Julie James is the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology.

Her responsibilities include:

- Key, basic and vocational skills qualifications for all ages
- Digital Wales: co-ordination of the ICT strategy
- Skills Sector Councils
- Workforce skills development, including support for individuals and businesses
- Youth employment and training
- Careers advice and guidance
- Apprenticeships
- Further Education

e-mail: correspondence.julie.james@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Huw Lewis is the Minister for Education and Skills.

His responsibilities include:

- Schools and colleges
- Student funding
- Higher education and universities
- Qualifications and the curriculum
- Teacher Training
- Education and training research
- Additional learning needs of pupils
- Welsh medium and bilingual education

e-mail: correspondence.huw.lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Carl Sargeant is the Minister for Natural Resources.

His responsibilities include:

- All activities of Natural Resources Wales
- Tackling climate change
- National Parks
- Sustainable Development
- Managing our waste and energy policies
- Managing our water, floods and protecting our coast
- Allotments
- Planning policy, including determination of planning disputes and appeals
- Building Regulations

e-mail: correspondence.carl.sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Ken Skates is the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism.

His responsibilities include:

- Tourism
- Policy on broadcasting
- National strategy and policy for culture in Wales
- Protecting historic buildings and promoting them as tourist attractions
- National strategy and policy for sport, physical activity and active recreation in Wales
- Sponsorship of the Arts Council of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Library of Wales, the Welsh Book Council and funds to the Wales Millennium Centre
- The National Botanic Gardens of Wales
- Issues surrounding the distribution of lottery funding
- National strategy and policy for culture in Wales, including policy on non-national museums, public libraries and archives
- Government Indemnity Scheme and the Acceptance in Lieu of Inheritance Tax Scheme

e-mail: correspondence.ken.skates@wales.gsi.gov.uk
The Counsel General for Wales

Theodore Huckle is the Counsel General for Wales.

His responsibilities include:

- Providing legal advice to the Welsh Government
- Representations about any matter affecting Wales
- Bringing, defending or appearing in legal proceedings to promote or protect the public interest of the people of Wales
- Referring to the Supreme Court a question of whether a provision of an Assembly Bill is within the Assembly’s legislative competence
- Facilitating public debate on whether there should be a separate Welsh jurisdiction
- Responding to proposals or consultations that affect legal matters in Wales
Contacting the Welsh Government

Contact details of main Welsh Government offices

**Aberystwyth**
**Address:**
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UR
**Telephone:** 0300 062 2021

**Cardiff**
**Address:**
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
**Telephone:** 029 2082 3650

**Llandudno Junction**
**Address:**
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
LL31 9RZ
**Telephone:** 0300 062 5603

**Merthyr Tydfil**
**Address:**
Rhydycar Business Park
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ
**Telephone:** 0300 062 8100
Glossary of terms

**Assembly Acts**

Welsh laws are officially known as Assembly Acts. They apply only to Wales and not to other parts of the UK. The National Assembly for Wales debates and passes these laws. The laws can only relate to policy areas devolved to Wales. However, any Assembly Member and/or Assembly Committee can propose one of these laws, and if the proposal receives a majority vote, through the various stages of scrutiny, then it becomes law.

The UK parliament in Westminster retains the power to introduce laws which affect Wales. UK Acts of Parliament may also contain provision to devolve further powers.

There may be occasions when the Welsh Government wishes to seek new powers. In such cases, legal orders are used to effect the transfer of new powers. These orders are known as Orders in Council which are passed in the UK Parliament and made in Privy Council which is a meeting between HM the Queen and senior politicians.

**Assembly Committees**

As well as their Plenary work Assembly Members may sit on a number of different committees, such as Health and Social Services Committee and Finance Committee. (For the full and current list of Assembly committees visit the National Assembly for Wales website.)

These committees consider and debate policy development, scrutinise the work and expenditure of the Welsh Government and examine and put forward proposals for Welsh Laws.

**Budget**

The Welsh Government (and the National Assembly for Wales) draws down funds from the Welsh Consolidated Fund. This is a ‘bank account’ which holds the public money that is allocated to Wales by the UK Government (with the approval of the UK Parliament via the Secretary of State for Wales).

The Welsh Government’s budget proposals must be approved by the National Assembly for Wales

**Cabinet**

The main decision-making body which comprises the First Minister and Welsh Ministers.

The Counsel General and the Deputy Welsh Ministers may attend Cabinet meetings at the invitation of the First Minister.
Civil Servants

Civil servants are government officials who work in offices across Wales – and the world – to develop and implement the Welsh Government’s policies. They are accountable to Welsh Ministers.

Coalition government

A government composed of two or more political parties. This happens when there is no outright majority for one party at an Assembly Election. The government consists of Ministers from different political parties.

Counsel General

The chief legal adviser to the Welsh Government. He/she does not necessarily have to be an Assembly Member.

Devolved responsibilities

The Welsh Government is responsible for many aspects of policy. These include: education, health, local government, transport, planning, economic development, social care, heritage, environment and sustainability.

The UK government is still responsible for certain public services in Wales such as police, prisons and the justice system. Matters such as tax and benefits, defence, national security and foreign affairs are also dealt with by the UK Government.

First Minister

The person nominated by the National Assembly for Wales to lead the government. This is usually the leader of the party with the most Assembly Members. After nomination, the First Minister is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen.

Government of Wales Act (GOWA) 2006

Under the Government of Wales Act 1998, the National Assembly for Wales was created as a single body. The Government of Wales Act (GOWA) 2006 created a separation between the government (i.e. the Welsh Government), sometimes called the executive, and the legislature, the law-passing body (i.e. the National Assembly for Wales). The purpose was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the two institutions.

The National Assembly for Wales holds Welsh Ministers to account through Assembly Questions, Debates and Committees.

The National Assembly for Wales is different from the Welsh Government. Whereas the Welsh Government consists of the governing Ministers in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales consists of all 60 elected Assembly Members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Legislative Programme</strong></th>
<th>The Welsh Government has its own annual Legislative Programme (announced every July).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministerial portfolios</strong></td>
<td>The areas for which Ministers are responsible; in the current government, these are: Education and Skills; Health and Social Services; Economy Science and Transport; Local Government and Government Business; Housing and Regeneration; Natural Resources and Food; Culture and Sport; Finance; Communities and Tackling Poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Assembly for Wales</strong></td>
<td>The democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, passes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account. It consists of 60 elected Assembly Members (AMs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secretary of State for Wales</strong></td>
<td>The Secretary of State for Wales represents Wales in the UK Cabinet on matters which are not devolved, such as social security, defence and tax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welsh Government</strong></td>
<td>The Welsh Government consists of the First Minister, Welsh Ministers, Deputy Welsh Ministers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Welsh Ministers</strong></td>
<td>The Assembly Members appointed by the First Minister to become members of his/her government. Each Welsh Minister has a different area of responsibility.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What has the Welsh Government achieved for Wales?

Since devolution, the Welsh Government has initiated some major improvements for the people of Wales; sometimes these have been different to the rest of the UK. These include:

- Free prescriptions for patients living in Wales
- New hospitals, free hospital parking and more dental practices providing NHS services
- Investing tens of millions of pounds in creating new, affordable housing
- Free swimming for children and over 60s
- Free entry to our National Museums and galleries
- Free bus travel for over 60s
- New railway lines, new rail services and increased investment in public transport
- Established the Foundation Phase for 3 to 7 year olds
- Implemented the Welsh language measure and improved access to Welsh medium education
- Introduced carrier bag charges to lessen the impact of plastic bags on the environment
- Wales was the first UK country to vote in favour of a smoking ban in public places. The ban was implemented in 2007

Can we make our own Welsh Laws?

Yes, we can. On 3 March 2011, people from across Wales voted in a referendum on the law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales.

Of those who voted, 63.5% said yes to the question “Do you want the Assembly now to be able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas it has powers for?”

The National Assembly of Wales can now make laws for Wales on subjects for which the Assembly and the Welsh Government have responsibility, without needing permission from the UK Parliament first.

The UK Parliament can still make laws for Wales in areas that are not devolved, such as defence and immigration.
The difference between Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales

The Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales are two distinct organisations.

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The National Assembly for Wales is similar to the UK Parliament in Westminster, which houses every MP from across the UK, whereas the Welsh Government is equivalent to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

The Senedd in Cardiff Bay is the home of the debating chamber for the National Assembly for Wales.

Elections to the National Assembly for Wales are held approximately every 5 years.

Referendum

A referendum is a vote in which all the people in a country are asked to give their opinion about or decide on an important political or social question.

The first referendum on the question of having a devolved Assembly for Wales was held in 1979, but the people of Wales rejected plans for devolution in Wales by four to one. All decisions affecting Wales continued to be made in London by Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom Parliament.

The second Referendum on the question of devolution for Wales was held on 18 September 1997: 50.3% voted yes on the question, “I agree that there should be a Welsh Assembly” (a 6,712 vote majority), while 49.7% voted against the creation of an Assembly.

Legislation was debated and passed by the UK Parliament to establish a new democratically elected body for Wales. The 1998 Government of Wales Act created the National Assembly for Wales, made arrangements for the first Assembly elections on 6 May 1999 and transferred most of the powers of the Secretary of State for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales.

A referendum on greater law-making powers for the National Assembly for Wales took place on Thursday 3rd March 2011. 63.5% voted in favour of greater law-making powers, while 36.5% voted against. This means that the Assembly can now make laws for Wales on devolved subjects, such as health and education.
# The difference between the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales

## The Welsh Government

The First Minister is nominated by the Assembly and subsequently appointed by Her Majesty the Queen.

First Minister appoints Ministers and Deputy Ministers with The Queen’s approval.

The Counsel General is nominated by the First Minister, whose recommendation must be endorsed by the Assembly, before being approved by Her Majesty the Queen.

The First Minister and the Welsh Ministers with responsibility for government departments form the Cabinet.

The Welsh Government proposes budgets, develops and implements policies.

The Welsh Government proposes laws.

If the National Assembly for Wales passes a law, the Welsh Government implements the policy.

## National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly)

60 elected Assembly Members (AMs) comprise the National Assembly for Wales (‘the Assembly’).

AMs nominate the First Minister.

AMs scrutinise government proposals and actions. They question Ministers about issues.

AMs scrutinise and approve the Welsh Government’s budget proposals.

AMs debate the government’s proposals, reflecting their own and their constituents’ views.

AMs vote on issues.

The National Assembly for Wales is able to pass Welsh laws in relation to the policy areas for which the Welsh Government has responsibility.
Want to find out more?

If you would like to find out more about the work of the Welsh Government, our offices and find answers to frequently asked questions then visit our website on the address below.

www.wales.gov.uk

You can follow us on Twitter and Facebook

www.twitter.com/welshgovernment
www.facebook.com/welshgovernment

Watch us on YouTube and view our images on Flickr

www.youtube.com/welshgovernment
www.flickr.com/welshgovernment