

## **Plaid Cymru Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

### **Candidate Representation and Participation**

#### **1. Purpose and Context**

This strategy sets out Plaid Cymru's approach to improving equality, diversity and inclusion across the party's membership, structures and candidate representation.

It fulfils the requirements under Section 30 of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024, which asks registered political parties to:

- Develop and publish a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Collect and publish anonymised diversity data relating to candidates
- Keep the strategy under regular review

The strategy also supports Plaid Cymru's preparations for the 2026 Senedd election, ensuring the party continues to build a broad, representative and inclusive movement that reflects the diversity of Wales.

Plaid Cymru recognises that improving representation requires sustained organisational effort, cultural change and proactive outreach. The strategy therefore combines long-term structural change with short-term actions aimed at widening participation ahead of the next election.

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#### **2. Vision**

Plaid Cymru's vision is of a political movement that reflects the full diversity of Wales and enables people from all backgrounds to participate in public life.

We aim to build a party that is:

##### **Representative**

Our candidates and elected representatives reflect the communities of Wales, including people from underrepresented backgrounds.

##### **Inclusive**

Members, activists and candidates feel welcomed, valued and respected within the party.

##### **Accessible**

Barriers to political participation are identified and removed so that people from all backgrounds can contribute to Welsh democracy. Improving representation strengthens democratic legitimacy and ensures the Senedd reflects the society it serves.

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### 3. Strategic Objectives

Plaid Cymru's approach to improving diversity and inclusion focuses on three core objectives.

#### **Increase Representation**

To increase the representation of individuals from under-represented backgrounds in political office, including:

- Women
- Ethnic minority communities
- LGBTQ+ people
- Disabled people
- People from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds
- Welsh speakers and learners from diverse backgrounds

#### **Build Capacity**

Plaid Cymru will develop the skills, confidence, knowledge and networks of potential candidates from under-represented groups so they can successfully stand for election and participate in political leadership.

#### **Foster an Inclusive Political Environment**

The party will promote an inclusive culture within its structures, events and campaigning activities, ensuring that all members feel able to participate fully.

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### 4. Senedd Candidates

Selection processes for the 2026 Senedd election were completed in 2025. Outreach and preparation activities began well in advance of the publication of the Welsh Government guidance, to ensure potential candidates were identified and supported early.

Delivery of this work involved:

- collaboration with volunteers and party sections such as Merched Plaid, Plaid Anabledd and Plaid Pride.
- partnership with external organisations such as Elect Her and Disability Wales.
- adoption of gender quotas which has ensured at least 50% of selected candidates are women and at least 50% of first placed candidates are women.

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### 5. Outreach and Candidate Development Programme

Plaid Cymru implements a structured outreach programme designed to identify, recruit and support potential candidates from diverse backgrounds.

This programme operates at both national and constituency level, with support from party headquarters, local branches and party sections.

### **Initial Outreach Actions**

Immediate actions have included:

Ensuring all party members are informed about the National Register of Candidates and application deadlines

Providing clear and accessible guidance on the candidate selection process

Hosting accessible information sessions explaining the role of elected representatives

Delivering targeted workshops and training for members from under-represented backgrounds who may be interested in standing for election.

These early interventions were aimed at ensuring that members who might not otherwise consider standing feel able to explore the opportunity.

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## **6. Programme Phases**

The outreach and diversity programme will be continuously implemented through a structured multi-phase approach.

### **Phase 1 – Research and Needs Assessment**

Plaid Cymru will conduct a landscape analysis of its membership and candidate pipeline to understand current levels of representation.

This will involve:

- voluntary diversity surveys
- interviews and focus groups with members
- engagement with community organisations
- identification of barriers to political participation.

The findings will inform reviews of the party's diversity and inclusion strategy and help identify priority groups for targeted support.

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### **Phase 2 – Programme Design and Development**

Using the evidence gathered in Phase 1, the party will design targeted programmes aimed at supporting potential candidates from under-represented groups. This will include ongoing

- recruitment initiatives aimed at diverse communities
  - awareness campaigns encouraging participation in politics
  - partnerships with civil society organisations
  - outreach through community networks and advocacy groups.
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### Phase 3 – Capacity Building and Support

Plaid Cymru will continuously deliver training and development opportunities for prospective candidates, including:

- campaign management
- public speaking and media engagement
- policy development
- political leadership skills
- community organising.

A mentorship network will be established linking aspiring candidates with experienced elected representatives and campaigners.

This network will provide guidance, encouragement and practical advice on navigating the challenges of political life.

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### Phase 4 – Advocacy and Awareness

Plaid Cymru will undertake public awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of diversity and representation in Welsh politics.

These campaigns will:

- promote the importance of inclusive democratic institutions
  - encourage individuals from under-represented groups to consider political participation
  - broaden the pool of potential candidates beyond existing party networks.
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### Phase 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this strategy will be continuously monitored.

Evaluation mechanisms will include:

- participant feedback
- diversity data monitoring
- programme performance reviews.

- This data will inform adjustments to ensure the programme remains effective and responsive.
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## 7. Removing Barriers to Participation

Plaid Cymru recognises that some individuals face additional barriers when seeking political office.

The party will work to reduce these barriers by:

- promoting access to financial support schemes available to candidates
  - encouraging flexible campaign practices that support candidates with caring responsibilities
  - ensuring campaign events and materials are accessible
  - signposting candidates to external support schemes, including those supporting disabled candidates.
  - These actions aim to ensure that individuals are not prevented from standing for office due to practical or financial barriers.
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## 8. Data Collection and Transparency

Plaid Cymru will collect anonymised diversity data relating to candidates in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

This data will:

- help monitor progress toward improving representation
  - identify gaps in participation
  - support evidence-based decision making.
  - All data collection will be voluntary, confidential and compliant with relevant data protection legislation.
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## 9. Inclusive Party Culture

Improving representation requires a supportive internal culture.

Plaid Cymru will therefore:

- promote inclusive behaviour across all party structures
- ensure candidate selection processes are fair and transparent
- provide training on equality, diversity and inclusion where appropriate
- ensure party events are welcoming and accessible.

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## 10. Governance and Accountability

Responsibility for overseeing this strategy rests with the National Executive Committee, with operational delivery led by the Campaigns Committee.

The party will publish regular updates on progress and review the strategy periodically to ensure it remains effective.

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## 11. Post-Campaign Support

Plaid Cymru recognises that support for candidates should continue after election campaigns.

Successful candidates will receive continued support in developing their roles as representatives.

Candidates who are not elected will be encouraged to remain involved in political life and supported in developing their skills for future opportunities.

This approach helps maintain engagement, develop experience within the party, and strengthen the pipeline of future candidates.

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## 12. Commitment to Welsh Language and Community Representation

As a national movement rooted in Welsh communities, Plaid Cymru will ensure that:

- strategy materials are available in Welsh and English
- outreach programmes support both Welsh speakers and learners
- political participation is accessible across all parts of Wales.

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## Conclusion

Plaid Cymru is committed to building a party and a Senedd that reflect the diversity of modern Wales.

Improving representation requires sustained effort, cultural change and practical support for those considering political participation.

Through the actions outlined in this strategy, Plaid Cymru aims to expand the pool of candidates, remove barriers to participation and strengthen Welsh democracy.