

Senedd Elections 2026

Directions to Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers from the Electoral Management Board

These directions are given by the Electoral Management Board under Sections 20B and 20C of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru etc. Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”), as amended by the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Act 2024 (“the 2024 Act”).

Under this legislation, the EMB may give directions in writing to Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) about the exercise of the officers’ functions in relation to Senedd elections.

These directions relate to the EMB’s obligation to operate the Welsh Elections Information Platform.

	Subject	Direction
1	<p>Polling station and accessibility information</p> <p><i>Provision of information to Democracy Club</i></p>	<p>Returning Officers must provide polling station and their accessibility information to Democracy Club who will process the data on behalf of the EMB.</p> <p>This information must include responses to the following questions, in relation to each polling station in the area for which the Returning Officer is responsible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the polling station a temporary structure?• Is there level access to the polling station?• If a ramp is used to provide access to the polling station, is the ramp permanent or temporary?• Is there parking nearby?• Is disabled parking available?• Is there a hearing loop in use at the polling station?• Are there publicly accessible toilets on site? <p>Democracy Club will also make available two optional free text fields with the headings “Getting to the station” and “At the station”, should Returning Officers wish to provide any further information.</p> <p>The data must be provided in a form, and in accordance with timescales, which will be determined by Democracy Club.</p> <p>If a polling station changes at short notice, the Returning Officer should use best endeavours to provide the updated information as soon as practicable.</p> <p><i>There is a legal requirement for the EMB to provide accessibility information for each polling station on the Welsh Elections Information Platform. The EMB is reliant on the Returning Officers providing this information as they are responsible for polling stations.</i></p> <p><i>All Returning Officers currently provide the Democracy Club with polling station data so this direction is to formalise those arrangements. The Welsh Elections Information Platform will obtain this information from Democracy Club and will use it to provide an area specific search functionality to voters.</i></p>

<p>2</p>	<p>Official Notices</p> <p><i>Provision of published notices</i></p>	<p>Returning Officers must provide to the EMB the formal notices relating to the election which Returning Officers are required to publish by Schedule 5 to the Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) Order 2025.</p> <p>Specifically, Returning Officers must provide the following to the EMB when they are published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Notice of Election (as required by paragraph 3 of Schedule 5); • The Statement of Parties and Persons Nominated (as required by paragraph 17 of Schedule 5); • The Notice of Poll (as required by paragraph 31(1) of Schedule 5); • The Notice of the Situation of Polling stations and the description of voters entitled to vote there (as required by paragraph 31(2) of Schedule 5); and • The Declaration of results (as required by regulation 64(4) of Schedule 5). <p>Each of these notices must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emailed to the EMB (to the email address which will be confirmed in guidance published by the EMB) as soon as practicable after the RO has published the notice and no later than 24 hours after publication; and • provided to the EMB in the same format in which the Returning Officer has published the notice on their own website. <p>If the Returning Officer amends and republishes any of these notices at a later date, they must email the updated notice to the EMB as soon as practicable for republication on the WEIP.</p> <p><i>The EMB must publish each of the 5 notices listed above directly on the WEIP. Returning Officers must provide these notices in order for the EMB to do so.</i></p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Nominations process</p> <p><i>Provision of information about the platform to candidates and election agents</i></p>	<p>When conducting the nomination process the Returning Officer must ensure that candidates and election agents receive the ‘required information’ about the Welsh Elections Information Platform.</p> <p>The ‘required information’ will be supplied by the EMB and will contain information about the Welsh Elections Information Platform and the election address submission process. It will also highlight the data sharing arrangements between Returning Officers and the EMB to aid transparency.</p> <p>It must be provided to the candidates and elections agents when nominations are delivered by hand or by electronic means, and the EMB will provide resources for both situations.</p> <p>It should be received by the candidates and election agents within 24 hours of the Returning Officer’s receipt of the nomination paper.</p> <p><i>The Returning Officer has the initial contact with candidates and election agents during the election process. The provision of the ‘required information’ at this point will explain the platform’s operation and the election address submission process, and will aid transparency as to the processing of relevant personal data.</i></p>

4	Information about candidates and election agents	Returning Officers must provide candidate and election agent data to the EMB for the purposes of the online election address submission system and for the publication of candidate information.		
<i>Candidate data for election addresses submission process</i> <i>Information to enable accessible presentation of election addresses on the platform</i>	The data to be provided is as follows:			
		Party list candidates	Individual candidates	
	Data set A - Election address submission information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Party name or registered party description 2. For each party list candidate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Full name or commonly used name (where provided) (b) Email address (where provided) 3. Election agent name 4. Election agent's email address (where provided) 5. Other system identifiers as required 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description - Independent or Annibynnol or both or blank 2. Candidate full name or commonly used name (where provided) 3. Candidate's email addresses (where provided) 4. Election agent name 5. Election agent's email address (where provided) 6. Other system identifiers as required 	
	Data set B – Information about Parties / candidates nominated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Party name or registered party description 2. Party emblem 3. For each party list candidate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Full name or commonly used name (where provided) (b) Home address or relevant area if home address is suppressed (c) Party membership statement (where provided) (d) Invalid/withdrawn party / candidate: as above with reason for invalidity/withdrawal 4. Other system identifiers as required 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description - Independent or Annibynnol or both or blank 2. Candidate full name or commonly used name (where provided) 3. Home address or relevant area if home address is suppressed 4. Party membership statement (where provided) 5. Invalid/withdrawn candidate: as above with reason for invalidity/withdrawal 6. Other system identifiers as required 	
	Data set A must be provided at the end of each working day during the period in which the Returning Officer is accepting nomination papers.			
	Data set B must be provided as soon as practicable after close of nominations. This should be after any final checks are completed for the			

		<p>purposes of publishing the Statement of Parties/Persons Nominated.</p> <p>Any amendments that are made to the Statement of Parties / Persons Nominated after the final version of the data has been provided to the EMB, must be reported to the EMB as soon as possible. This must be done in the process outlined in the guidance issued by the EMB.</p>
5	<p>Publicising the platform</p> <p><i>Wording on poll cards</i></p> <p><i>Linking to the platform</i></p>	<p>1. In order to promote the Welsh Election Information Platform, Returning Officers must publish the following:</p> <p>(a) <u>Wording on poll cards</u></p> <p>The following wording must be included on the poll cards issued by the Returning Officer -</p> <p>I gael gwybodaeth am y pleidiau a'r ymgeiswyr sy'n sefyll yn eich ardal chi, ewch i bwrwpleidlais.cymru</p> <p>For information of parties and candidates standing in your area: go to vote.wales</p> <p>This can be placed wherever is most appropriate for the specific design each Returning Officer approves. It must be included on all types of poll cards.</p> <p>(b) <u>Information on Council websites</u></p> <p>Returning Officers must ensure that a link to the Welsh Elections Information Platform is published on their Council website alongside other information they publish about the election. The link must be published on the website before or at the same time as the Notice of Election is published.</p> <p>2. When conducting voter engagement activities such as social media posts the Returning Officer should also promote the Welsh Elections Information Platform.</p> <p><i>The EMB will publicise the platform but Returning Officers should play a key role in this promotional activity, especially where they have direct contact with voters. The EMB will provide publicity materials to aid the Returning Officers in this engagement activity.</i></p>

6	<p>Verification and Count</p> <p><i>Count Results</i></p>	<p>Returning Officers must provide the EMB with the count results by constituency.</p> <p>This must be in the format prescribed by the EMB in the guidance which it issues in relation to the platform, and must be provided to the EMB on the day of the declaration of results.</p> <p>In certain circumstances the deadline for provision of this information may be extended up to 3 calendar days from the declaration of results, with the agreement of the EMB.</p> <p>The EMB requires that this information is provided in addition to the published Declaration of results (as to which see direction 6, below) in order to make possible the accessible presentation of results information on the platform.</p> <p><i>The EMB will need to publish count results on the Welsh Election Information Platform. We would expect most ROs to provide the information referred to in this direction on the day of the count, although the results will not be full real time. The EMB may agree to receive delayed results information in some circumstances where a Returning Officer may have complex logistics issues.</i></p>
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