

Who makes decisions?

The Senedd/Welsh Parliament

Members of the Senedd sit in the Senedd in Cardiff Bay. It's also called the Welsh Parliament. There are 60 Members of the Senedd (MS), and they're elected every 5 years. They make decisions on matters like health care, public transport, and what you learn about in school. These are just some of the areas that Members of the Senedd in Cardiff are responsible for. All of these decisions used to be made by Members of Parliament in London, but in 1997 Welsh people voted to have their own parliament so they could make their own decisions about certain areas of their lives. This process is called devolution.

Here is a list of the areas that the Senedd can make decisions about:

- Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development
- Ancient monuments and historic buildings
- Culture
- Economic development
- Education and training
- Environment
- Fire and rescue services and promotion of fire safety
- Food
- Health and health services
- Highways and transport
- Housing
- Local government
- Public administration
- Social welfare
- Sport and recreation
- Tourism
- Town and country planning
- Water and flood defence
- Welsh language

Houses of Parliament

The Houses of Parliament are in Westminster in London, they're divided into two chambers: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to sit in the House of Commons. The Houses of Parliament make laws and decisions on areas that **are not** devolved to The Senedd, these are called reserved powers. MPs are elected in a general election, which usually happens every 5 years.

These are issues that the Houses of Parliament makes decisions about. These are called 'reserved powers'.

- Crime and justice
- Defence (how the UK defends itself)
- Foreign Affairs (how the UK communicates and works with other countries)
- Immigration
- Trade (how businesses in the UK buy and sell goods)
- Broadcasting (rules about the content we watch and listen to on TV, radio, and online)

Local Councils

Powers to make decisions about a local area.

Wales has 22 councils. Councils are made up of councillors who are elected every 4 years in local elections.

This is a list of things that a local council makes decisions about:

- Planning and building control
- Education
- Trading standards
- Alcohol, entertainment and gambling licensing
- Health and safety
- Libraries, leisure and tourism
- Environmental health and rubbish collections
- Transport and highways
- Housing
- Social services

Community Councils

There are also 730 community councils in Wales, which can be responsible for anything between 200 and 45,000+ people. Your community council might be in charge of issues that only affect your local community, for instance, your local park.

Who to contact

It can be difficult to know whether an issue you want to change is the responsibility of the Senedd, the Houses of Parliament, or a Local or Community Council. Look at the lists of powers, and think about who would be best to contact about the issue you want to raise.

It's worth asking your teacher, another adult you trust to help you. You can also contact more than one of these organisations at the same time.

Top-tip

'Cc' the Children's Commissioner into letters you send to MPs or AMs. This helps the Commissioner know what you want to change.