Electoral Commission Public Opinion Research

Welsh local government elections – May 2017

Methodology

- This data is based upon the results from 451 telephone interviews conducted across Wales between the 5 May and 5 June. Interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 and over. Data is weighted to match the profile of the population.

- Where relevant, figures are compared with the results from the equivalent survey which fielded after the 2012 Welsh local council election. In 2012 fieldwork took place between 4 and 22 May 2012 and comprised 750 interviews with adults aged 18 and over.

- In 2017 and in 2012, fieldwork was conducted by ICM.

Headline findings

- Satisfaction with the registration system has improved, from 84% in 2012 to 89% in 2017.

- General satisfaction with the procedures for voting in elections and referendums in Great Britain has also appears to have improved with 82% saying they are generally satisfied, up slightly from 80% in 2012.

- Over eight in ten (81%) said they were confident that the polls held on May 4 were well run, again an improvement on the 77% that said they were confident that the 2012 Welsh local elections were well run.

- Only a third (34%) felt that there was 'a lot of media coverage' on the Welsh local elections while 55% thought that the elections were overshadowed by the announcement of the parliamentary general election.

- Despite this, more than four in five voters (82%) said they found it easy to access information on how to cast their vote, although a smaller proportion (56%) said they found it easy to access information on the candidates standing.

- In line with this, 95% of those that voted on 4 May said that they had found it easy to complete their ballot paper. This is in line with 2012, when 97% said they found it easy.

Full questionnaire and responses

- Where results do not sum to 100, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated.

- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. Base sizes are in brackets.

- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one half of one percent, but not zero.

REGISTRATION, TURNOUT AND VOTING

1. As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register that is the official list of people who can vote, either where you are living now or somewhere else?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Yes – where living now	92	96
Yes – somewhere else / another address	2	3
No	5	1
Don't know	1	*

2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the procedure for getting your name on the electoral register?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very satisfied	54	67
Fairly satisfied	30	22
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	8
Fairly dissatisfied	1	1
Very dissatisfied	2	2
Don't know	5	1

N.B. 2012 wording: 'How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the procedure for getting your name on this list of those people who are registered to vote?'

2a. As you may know, on Thursday 4th May there was an election in your area. Can you tell me the name of the council or authority you were electing representatives to?

	2017
	%
Respondent <u>correctly</u> names council/authority	60
Respondent <u>incorrectly</u> names council/authority	18
Interviewer is unsure about respondent's answer	6
Respondent does not know/cannot remember	17

3.   As you may know, on Thursday 4 May there were the Welsh Local Council elections.

We often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they were sick, did not have the time, or were just not interested. How about you – did you manage to vote?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Yes	49	67
No	51	33
Don't know	-	*

N.B. 2012 wording: 'Many people have told us they didn't manage to vote on 5th May. How about you – did you manage to vote in the…'

4.   People have different reasons for voting in elections and referendums.
Why did you vote in the Welsh Local Council elections on Thursday 4th May?
MULTICODE

	2012	2017
	%	%
Base: All voters	(398)	(326)
Civic responsibility reasons		
It is important to vote/It is my civic duty/everyone should vote/It is my right to vote	48	43
I always vote	17	22
I wanted to be part of the democratic process/democracy	-	10
To show my support/support the community	1	10
People fought to win the right to vote for me/others	9	5
To express a view		
I wanted to have a say	30	19
To support my party/candidates of preference/to help my party/candidate win	-	7
If people don't vote then you have no right to complain/have an opinion	12	7
Concerned about local issues	6	4
To help create a change		
To get a change	11	4
Not happy with the local government/local council	8	3

Other reasons

To vote for position supported by my party	-	9
I am not happy with the result of the EU referendum	-	-
I am not happy with the national government / decision to call an election	-	*
I am not happy with the (national) opposition	-	*
Other	3	15
None of these / no reason	*	1
Don't know	1	1

5. Some people have told us they intentionally spoiled their ballot paper/s on May 4th by deliberately leaving the ballot paper/s blank or by not voting in the instructed way. They did this to register a protest.

Did you intentionally spoil your own ballot paper or not in the Welsh local council elections?

Base: All voters	2017 % (326)
Yes	1
No	99
Don't know	-
Refused	-

6. Please can you tell me why you spoilt your ballot paper(s)? MULTICODE.

Base: All who spoilt their ballot paper(s)	2017 (5)
The electoral system was too confusing	-
Too complicated to complete multiple ballot papers	-
There was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win/my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome	*
I couldn't be bothered	-
Waste of time/Could see no point	*
Had no interest/view on the subject	-
I disagree with the position of Combined Authority Mayor	*
There was no point in voting because the Combined Authority Mayor can't change anything / change anything / has no power	-
The Combined Authority Mayor elections aren't important	-
I didn't know what the Combined Authority Mayor election was for / didn't understand the role of a CAM	*
I didn't know what the candidates stood for / who the candidates were	1
There is no point in voting because the local council can't do very much / change anything / has no power	-
Local council elections aren't important	-
Other	*
Don't know	-

7. People have many reasons for not voting in elections. Why did you not vote in the Welsh local council elections on Thursday 4th May?* MULTICODE.

	2012 % (352)	2017 % (125)
Base: All non-voters		
Circumstances		
Lack of time/too busy/I was busy at work	22	27
I forgot	8	6
I was away on 4th May / voting day	6	6
I really intended to vote but circumstances on the day prevented me	2	2
Medical/health reasons	6	1
I couldn't get to the polling station/it was inconvenient	4	6
Disinterest/no point		
I'm just not interested in politics	5	4
Had no interest/view on the subject	-	3
Waste of time/could see no point	-	5
There was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win/my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome	3	9
I couldn't be bothered	5	4
No information/indecision/complicated		
I didn't get any information	6	1
I didn't know enough about the different options/candidates	3	1
I didn't know what the candidates stood for	-	-
I couldn't decide which way to vote	2	-
I don't know anything about local politics	-	-
I didn't understand/too confusing	-	-
I don't know anything about politics	-	-
Administration		
I wasn't registered	6	5
I didn't receive a postal vote/it arrived too late	1	*
I didn't receive a polling card	2	*
Elections not important		
There was no point in voting because the **county council** can't do very much/can't change anything/has no power	-	-
There was no point in voting because the **local council** can't do very much/can't change anything/has no power	8	4
Parties/candidates		
I didn't like the candidates/parties/they didn't represent my views	4	2
You just can't trust politicians to keep their promises	4	2
There was no point in voting because all the parties are the same	3	5
Politicians do not care/only in politics for own benefit	-	1
Awareness/lack of awareness		
I didn't know who the candidates in my area were /and where to find information	-	-
I didn't know there was an election	-	*
I didn't know what these elections were about / were for	-	1
I don't know what the Combined Authority Mayor is for	-	-
Miscellaneous		
I don't vote in local elections	-	-
I never vote	-	*
Other	6	21
None of these/no reason	1	3
Don't know	*	-

8. -
9. -

10. Did you vote on the 4th of May….

	2012	2017
	%	%
Base: All voters	*(398)*	*(326)*
In person at polling station	74	76
By post	25	24
By proxy (IF NECESSARY SAY: getting someone to vote on your behalf)	1	-
Other	-	-
Don't know	*	-

11. Was this the first time you voted in <u>any</u> election or referendum?

	2017
	%
Base: All voters	*(326)*
Yes, it was my first time	*
Yes, it was my first time as I wasn't eligible before [for reasons such as age or nationality]	-
No, I voted before	99
Don't know/cannot remember	*

12. Which of these statements best describes your attitude towards voting at UK Parliamentary General Elections (for Westminster)?

	2017
	%
I always vote	74
I sometimes vote	12
I never vote	2
I've not been eligible to vote in the past	5
I voted for the first time in 2015	7
Don't know	-

13. VOTERS: You already told me that you voted, but would you have been more likely to vote on 4th May, less likely, or would it have made no difference one way or the other if…

NON-VOTERS: Would you have been more likely to vote on 4th May, less likely, or would it have made no difference one way or the other if…

	More likely	Less likely	No difference	Don't know	Voted anyway
	%	%	%	%	**%**
If you could have voted on the weekend instead	19	2	79	-	*

If you could have voted online instead	39	14	45	*	2
If you had been able to register to vote on election day	22	2	71	2	1
If people had to show proof of identity at polling stations	10	9	79	1	1
If you could have voted in a polling station in the days before the election including the Saturday and the Sunday before the election	26	2	71	*	*
If it was easier for you to get a postal vote	27	5	66	1	1

14. Please could you tell me whether you think each of the following statements are true or false?

	True %	False %	Don't know %
A. You have to take ID with you to vote at a polling station (FALSE)	15	81	3
B. You are automatically registered to vote if you pay council tax (FALSE)	23	68	8
C. You are automatically registered to vote if you are of legal voting age (FALSE)	30	67	2
D. You can register to vote until the day before an election (FALSE)	17	72	11
E. You are at risk of getting a fine if you don't register to vote (TRUE)	14	82	4
F. One household member is able to register other members of the household (FALSE)	52	39	9
G. You can register to vote online (TRUE)	70	14	15

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree strongly %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %
You should be able to register to vote until the day before the election	38	20	10	13	17	2
You should be able to register to vote in a polling station on the day of the election	25	12	11	19	31	2

Local government should be able to use other information they hold about me (for example my Council Tax record) to automatically update my details on an electoral register	20	22	12	14	30	2
It should be my responsibility, no the government's, to keep my electoral registration details up to date	46	27	8	10	7	2
You should automatically be added to the electoral register when you receive your National Insurance number	37	26	12	10	14	2

AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

16. How much if anything did you feel you knew about the Welsh Council elections on Thursday 4 May? Would you say you knew…

	2012 %	2017 %
A great deal	14	14
A fair amount	41	44
Not very much	30	33
Nothing at all	14	9
Don't know	*	*

N.B. 2012 wording: 'How much if anything did you feel you knew about what the election on 3rd May was about?'

17. Would you say it was very easy, fairly easy, neither easy nor difficult, fairly difficult or very difficult to access information on…?

	Very easy %	Fairly easy %	Neither/ Nor %	Fairly difficult %	Very difficult %	DK %
How to cast your vote at the Welsh council election	49	32	10	3	2	3
What the Welsh council elections were for	27	38	14	13	3	6
Information on the candidates standing in the Welsh local council	25	32	15	16	6	6

		election						

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Agree strongly %	Tend to agree %	Neither/ Nor %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	DK %
There was a lot of media coverage on the Welsh council elections	2017	17	17	16	26	23	1
I had enough information on how to cast my vote in the Welsh council election	2017	47	30	7	9	7	*
I knew enough about what the Welsh council elections was about / for	2017	41	29	11	12	7	*
I had enough information on candidates to be able to make an informed decision in the Welsh council elections	2017	30	34	7	12	16	1
n.b. 2012 wording omits 'on candidates'	2012	30	25	13	14	15	3
The Welsh council election was overshadowed by the focus on the parliamentary general election	2017	32	24	13	17	14	1

19. Where did you access information on candidates?

	2017
Base: All who agree at Q18d or Q18e	*(282)*
	%
Leaflet or flyer from a candidate/political party	75
Leaflet or flyer from another source	20
Social media	19
Candidate's website	18
People talking about it	23
Friends and family	22
My local council website	21
On another specific website	11
Posters or billboards	17
The 'Your Vote Matters' website	4
I didn't find/see any information	*
Somewhere else	26
None of these	1
Don't know	-

20. Thinking about the last few months, which of the following can you recall happening?

	2017
	%
I received a leaflet from a political party at my home	87
I saw an advert or message from a political party on television	55
I saw an advert or message from a political party on social media	39
I saw campaigners from political parties giving out leaflets near to where I live	43
A campaigner from a political party knocked on my door	46
None of these	2
Don't know	-

21. How much would you say you know about local councils and the services they provide? Is that…?

	2017
	%
A great deal	16
A fair amount	50
Not very much	28
Nothing at all	6
Don't know	-

VOTING PROCESS AND PRIORITIES

22. Generally speaking, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the procedures for voting in elections and referendums in Great Britain?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very satisfied	36	34
Fairly satisfied	43	48
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	10
Fairly dissatisfied	5	2
Very dissatisfied	3	3
Don't know	2	3

23. Why do you say you were dissatisfied with the procedure for voting in elections? MULTICODE.

	2012	2017
Base: All fairly or very dissatisfied with procedure for voting	*(63)*	*(25)*
	%	%
Voting procedure		
Length of time it takes	-	7
Process is poorly represented/ misrepresented	-	10
Outdated methods/paper based/dropping ballots into the box	-	-
Dislike the counting process	-	-
Voting process should be available online	9	-
The system is open to abuse	-	2
Voting system should be more secure	6	2
Voting should be spread over a few days	3	-
Many people didn't get to vote/register	2	2
Issues with postal voting	-	-
Everyone should vote/ compulsory voting	1	-
Not enough polling stations to choose from	6	-
Non UK citizens are not eligible to vote	-	2
Voting should be done in pen/a more permanent mark / not pencil	-	-
Voters should be required to show identification	-	-
Issues with secrecy/ anonymity of voting	-	-
Too many elections taking place on the same day	-	-
Lack of information		
Not enough information/ media coverage	17	13
People don't/didn't understand what the elections were about/too complicated	2	-
Voting system		
The system is not fair	2	11
Disagree with /don't like the voting system	-	28
Lack of democracy within the system	-	2
Confusion with multiple voting systems	-	6
Politicians/the political system		
Don't trust politicians/ politicians don't fulfil their promises	8	21
Dislike politicians' behaviour	-	6
Need more options/ opinions/choice	1	6
May end up voting for people/positions I don't support	2	-
Experience of voting		
Didn't receive a polling card	-	-
Poor accessibility of polling stations	-	-
Because of the outcome/ dismay with election results	-	2
Other		
Corruption/fraud/fixed results	-	3
Should be simpler	-	5
Waste of money	-	-
Too many elections recently	-	-
Other	31	13
Don't know	4	-

24. How confident, if at all, are you that the election(s) on May 4th was/were well run?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very confident	33	35
Fairly confident	44	45
Not very confident	5	7
Not at all confident	4	4
Don't know	15	8

25. Why do you say you are confident that the elections was/were well run? MULTICODE

	2017
Base: All very/fairly confident at Q23	(381)
	%
Well organised	29
Clear/concise ballot/easy to vote	24
Quick easy voting	20
There was a lot of information about the elections	14
Trust the staff	13
Professionally conducted	10
No negative feedback	12
Tried and tested	7
Voting system fair	8
Accessible polling station	12
Well publicised	9
Good staff attitude	10
Personal involvement	3
Results were in the media quickly	4
Received polling card ballot papers in good time	3
Everyone had the opportunity to vote	4
Well canvassed	4
Feel it was the right result	5
High turnout	2
Others	25
None	2
Don't know	6

26. Why do you say that you are not confident that the election(s) was/were well run? DO NOT PROMPT. MULTICODE.

	2017
Base: All not very/not at all confident	*(40)*
	%
Lack of information	
Lack of information/publicity/don't know much/anything about it	51
Lack of information about the candidates	24
Information confusing/some people didn't understand what the vote was for	9
Campaign issues/candidate	
Lack of canvassing/personal contact	1
TV/press coverage was biased/badly presented	-
Little choice in who to vote for	2
There was misinformation/stupid allegations as to what the vote was about	2
Polling station/ballot issues	
Didn't receive a polling card/postal ballot papers	1
The counting process was not well verified	2
Lack of time given to vote/decide	1
Low turnout	9
Badly run/organised	1
Long wait for results	-
I didn't know how to vote/what to do in the polling station/how to fill in my ballot paper	3
Two/More elections on one day/too much to organise/handle	-
Voting system and procedure	
People did not know the voting procedure	3
People's opinions are not valued/vote will make no difference	-
Outdated/unfair system	-
Combination of elections	-
Politicians/political system	
Mistrust/Don't stick to their promises/just in it for themselves	9
Fraud security	3
Corruption/fraud/fixed results	
General impression/word of mouth	
I had a bad impression	-
I did not witness what went on	-
From what I have read/heard	
Other	
Because of the outcome/dismay with election results	-
Disinterested/don't care about politics	4
Dislike local government	1
Didn't vote for personal reasons	-
Issues registering to vote	-
Some did not have the opportunity to vote/had the opportunity taken away	-
Other	10

27. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the process of voting at a polling station/polling place? Would you say…

	2012	2017
Base: All polling station voters	*(301)*	*(252)*
	%	%
Very satisfied	76	74
Fairly satisfied	21	22
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	3
Fairly dissatisfied	*	1
Very dissatisfied	1	-
Don't know	-	-

28. Once you arrived at your polling station/polling place, how easy or difficult was it for you to get inside to vote?

	2012	2017
Base: All polling station voters	*(301)*	*(252)*
	%	%
Very easy	90	91
Fairly easy	8	9
Neither easy nor difficult	*	-
Fairly difficult	2	*
Very difficult	-	*
Don't know	-	-

29. Thinking back to when you went to vote at the polling station/polling place, how useful, if at all, was the help or support available from polling station staff on how to vote? Was it ...

	2012	2017
Base: All polling station voters	*(301)*	*(252)*
	%	%
Very useful	55	54
Fairly useful	14	8
Not very useful	1	2
Not at all useful	1	1
Didn't use them/need them	28	35
Don't know	*	*

30. And again thinking back to when you went to vote at the polling station/polling place, how useful, if at all were any written instructions on how to vote, such as a poster on display in the polling booth or guidance on the ballot paper(s)? Were they…

	2012	2017
Base: All polling station voters	*(301)*	*(252)*
	%	%
Very useful	42	45
Fairly useful	20	20
Not very useful	4	2
Not at all useful	1	1

Didn't use them/need them	32	32
Don't know	1	*

31. How easy or difficult was it to understand what you had to do in order to complete and return your postal vote? Would you say…

	2012	2017
Base: All postal voters	(94)	(74)
	%	%
Very easy	78	61
Fairly easy	17	26
Neither easy nor difficult	2	2
Fairly difficult	1	11
Very difficult	2	-
Don't know	-	-

32. Thinking back to when you voted by post, how useful, if at all were any written instructions on how to vote and return your vote, such as guidance on the ballot paper(s)? Were they…

	2012	2017
Base: All postal voters	(94)	(74)
	%	%
Very useful	72	64
Fairly useful	26	18
Not very useful	-	9
Not at all useful	*	-
Didn't use them/need them	-	10
Don't know	1	-

33. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the process of voting by post? Would you say…

	2012	2017
Base: All postal voters	(94)	(74)
	%	%
Very satisfied	87	76
Fairly satisfied	12	24
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	-
Fairly dissatisfied	-	-
Very dissatisfied	-	-
Don't know	-	-

COMPLETING THE BALLOT PAPER

34. Some people said it was difficult to fill in the ballot paper when voting in the 4th May Welsh council elections. How easy or difficult did you find it to fill in the ballot paper for this election? Was it…

	2012	2017
Base: All who voted	(398)	(326)
	%	%
Very easy	84	77
Fairly easy	14	19
Neither easy nor difficult	2	4
Fairly difficult	*	1
Very difficult	1	-
Don't know	*	-

35. Why did you say it was difficult?
N.B. Due to extremely low base size, actual figures shown.

	2012	2017
Base: All who said very/fairly difficult at Q34	(4)	(6)
I didn't know how many candidates to vote for / didn't know if I could vote for more than 1 candidate	-	*
Complex/confusing	-	*
Instructions were unclear	*	-
The layout was confusing	*	*
Lack of understanding/clarity	-	-
Difficulties using forms	-	*
Too many candidates	-	*
Lack of information	-	-
The candidates were in a confusing order	-	*
The parties were in a confusing order	-	*
The size of the ballot paper	-	-
I could not easily find the party name of my choice	-	*
I could not easily find the party or candidate of my choice	-	-
Text too small	-	-
Didn't know if I should use an X or a 1	-	-
I don't understand how the electoral system works	-	-
Other	1	*
Don't know	-	-

36. I am going to read you some statements relating to the rules on the money that political parties, organisations and other individuals use when campaigning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Agree strongly %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %
The spending and funding of political parties, candidates and other campaigning organisations at elections is open and transparent	2012	16	17	26	21	21	-
	2017	11	16	21	23	24	6
If a political party or another campaigner is caught breaking the rules, the authorities will take appropriate actions	2017	40	22	8	15	12	3
I can easily find out how much political parties, candidates and other organisations spent on campaigning and how they were funded	2017	9	14	22	22	23	10

ELECTORAL FRAUD

37. How much electoral fraud, if any, do you think took place at the May 4th elections? Would you say that it happened…?

	2012 %	2017 %
A lot	4	6
A little	26	19
Hardly anything at all	34	22
Nothing at all	12	12
Don't know	24	42

38. Which one of the following best describes why you think electoral fraud or abuse took place on 4th May?

	2012	2017
	%	%
Base: All who thought a lot/a little fraud took place	*(217)*	*(119)*
I have seen stories in the media about political parties breaking the rules	-	32
General impression that fraud is a problem	29	14
I saw stories in the media about electoral fraud	13	4
Because you don't have to provide identification to vote	-	15
Identity fraud is on the increase	36	10
Postal voting is not secure	12	8
I heard from someone else that electoral fraud took place	1	1
People are registering other voters at the same address	-	3
People are registering multiple times	-	-
I have first-hand experience of electoral fraud	2	2
Other	4	8
Don't know	4	2

39. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud and abuse, would you say that **voting in general** is…

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very safe	21	25
Fairly safe	58	50
Neither safe nor unsafe	9	15
Fairly unsafe	4	5
Very unsafe	2	3
Don't know	5	1

40. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud and abuse, would you say that voting at a polling station is…

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very safe	41	38
Fairly safe	47	46
Neither safe nor unsafe	7	8
Fairly unsafe	2	3
Very unsafe	1	2
Don't know	2	3

41. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud and abuse, would you say that voting by post is…

	2012	2017
	%	%
Very safe	16	25
Fairly safe	39	36
Neither safe nor unsafe	11	11
Fairly unsafe	17	15
Very unsafe	7	5
Don't know	10	8

42. As you may know, on the 8th of June there will be a UK parliamentary general election, how likely are you to vote at the general election? Is that…?

	2017
	%
Very likely	87
Fairly likely	9
Neither likely nor unlikely	1
Fairly unlikely	1
Very unlikely	2
Don't know	*
I am not eligible to vote in UK Parliamentary General Elections	-