

What do the parties say? Key humanist issues at the 2021 Wales Senedd elections

All party policies come from the respective party manifestos unless a specific reference is given.

| Wales Humanists question | Labour | Conservatives | Plaid Cymru | Liberal Democrats | Abolish the Assembly | Green Party of England and Wales |
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| Manifesto link | https://humanists.uk/WE2021/lab | https://humanists.uk/WE2021/con | https://humanists.uk/WE2021/plaid | https://humanists.uk/WE2021/libdem | Not yet published. | https://humanists.uk/WE2021/green |
| Would you support school assemblies in Wales being equally inclusive of all pupils, regardless of religion or belief, rather than being acts of collective worship? | No stated policy. The outgoing Government refused to address the matter as part of the Curriculum and Assessment act, but also committed to publish a plan outlining how it will meet a set of UN Committee recommendations on children's rights that include the abolition of compulsory Christian worship in schools. | No stated policy in Wales. In England, the UK Government has recently said that if it is made aware of English schools breaching a requirement to carry out a daily act of worship, they will be 'investigated' and 'reminded of their duty on this matter'. | No stated policy but the manifesto states that they will 'bring the UNCRC fully into Welsh Law'. | Welsh Liberal Democrats has no stated policy unlike the English Liberal Democrats who support its removal. The only Liberal Democrat MS in the last Senedd term refused to address collective worship as Education Minister, while admitting that if personally she was 'starting from a blank piece of paper,' she would be unlikely to 'enshrine the law in the way it currently is'. ¹ | No stated policy. | Yes – The party will 'abolish the requirement for a compulsory daily act of worship. Schools which choose to continue to hold acts of worship will provide an alternative activity for learners who choose not to take part. Pupils who do not participate in worship will not suffer any form of discrimination.' ² |
| Do you support the teaching of high-quality, comprehensive, and mandatory relationships and sexuality education in all schools? | Yes – this has been introduced as a mandatory element in the Curriculum and Assessment act by the current Labour Government and the RSE code is due for consultation after the election. There is a commitment to comprehensive, developmentally appropriate RSE in all schools. | No stated policy. Welsh Conservatives held a free vote for Senedd Members on this issue during the passage of the Curriculum and Assessment act; most voted in favour of mandatory RSE lessons across all schools. | Yes – Plaid Cymru supported the requirement for mandatory RSE during the passage of the Curriculum and Assessment act. | Yes – this has been a key policy introduced as a mandatory element in the Curriculum and Assessment act by the current Liberal Democrat MS in her role as Education Minister and the RSE code is due for consultation after the election. There is a commitment to comprehensive, developmentally appropriate RSE in all schools. | No stated policy but would see responsibility return to Westminster where policy on RSE permits a parental right to withdraw their child from the subject and allows for a denominational approach in faith schools. | Yes – committed to 'develop and implement a Wales-wide strategy to tackle gender-based violence... This will include providing education across Wales on violence against women and girls to increase awareness...' |
| Would you support fully inclusive school admissions with no discrimination on the basis of religion? | No stated policy and in the last Senedd term there has been no open discussion on the status of faith schools and admission policies. However, the new Curriculum and Assessment act will place a requirement on faith schools to deliver non-denominational RVE at a parent's request | No stated policy. The Conservative Government in England has allowed new fully selective voluntary aided faith schools to open. | No stated policy. | No stated Welsh Liberal Democrats policy. As Education Minister, the serving Liberal Democrat MS did nothing to address admissions policies, but she did place a requirement on faith schools to deliver non-denominational RVE at a parent's request. In England the party is supportive of faith schools but policy calls | No stated policy on education but would see responsibility return to Westminster where Government policy supports increasing the number of fully discriminatory faith schools. | Yes – party policy states 'No publicly-funded school shall be run by a religious organisation. Schools may teach about religions, comparing examples which originated in each continent, but are prohibited from delivering religious instruction in any form or encouraging adherence to |

¹ Humanists UK, 'Disappointment as Welsh Government refuses to act on collective worship during current Assembly term', 8 January 2020. <https://humanism.org.uk/2020/01/08/disappointment-as-welsh-governmen-t-refuses-to-act-on-collective-worship-during-current-assembly-term/>

² The Green Party, *Education Policy* <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/ed.html>

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| | | | | for 'a new approach to state funded faith schools which... ensures that selection in admissions on the basis of religion or belief to state funded schools is phased out over up to six years.' ³ | | any particular religious belief.' ⁴ |
| Would you support inclusive healthcare settings where non-religious pastoral support is given the same status and funding as religious chaplaincy? | No stated policy and no action taken in the current Senedd term with all decisions on chaplaincy and pastoral care left to the seven health boards. No national direction given on the need for equality in pastoral care provision. | No stated policy. | No stated policy. | No stated policy. | No stated policy but would see responsibility return to Westminster where non-religious pastoral care has wider support. | No stated policy. |
| Would you address the privilege shown to religious groups in the Faith Communities Forum by giving membership to humanists, or equal and fair access to the First Minister and all ministerial meetings? | Has not done this while in power. The Equality Minister committed to reviewing the matter, but this has been postponed due to the pandemic. | No stated policy]. | No stated policy. | No stated policy. | No stated policy. | No stated policy'. |
| Would you support the legal recognition of humanist marriages? | Yes – Labour supports legal recognition of humanist marriages in Westminster, and the Welsh Government also voiced support in a recent consultation on the matter. ⁵ | No plans to extend legal recognition. The UK Government recently commissioned the Law Commission to undertake a two-year review of marriage law – but forbid it from making a decision on whether or not to give humanist marriages legal recognition. | Yes – Plaid Cymru would support changes to marriage law including devolving responsibility to Wales and permitting legal recognition of humanist marriages. ⁶ | Yes – the federal party has repeatedly committed to legal recognition of humanist marriages, including in its 2019 UK General Election manifesto, which said 'Introduce legal recognition of humanist marriages.' | No stated policy. | Yes – the Green Party told us in 2017, 'Clearly the law should allow those who wish to have a humanist marriage ceremony the same rights as couples who want a religious ceremony with the celebrant of their choice. The Green Party is committed to ending the current discrimination as soon as possible.' |
| Would you oppose any moves in Westminster to weaken our human rights settlement? | Yes – Labour is opposing such moves in Westminster. in the next Senedd term Welsh Labour 'will act to tackle the systemic and structural inequalities that stand in the way of a free, fair and tolerant Wales – and fight for the vital human rights that help underpin that work. | No – the UK Government plans to curtail the Human Rights Act and judicial review. The 2019 general election manifesto stated, 'We will update the Human Rights Act and administrative law to ensure that there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals, our vital national | Yes – Plaid Cymru confirmed in the manifesto that they support closer alignment with the EU, and will oppose any moves by a UK Government to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights. They will ensure that 'the Welsh state enshrines the basic rights of its citizens in a | Yes – Liberal Democrats want to protect the Human Rights Act. They also seek to enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in UK law and take appropriate action to comply with decisions of UK courts and the European Court of Human Rights. ⁸ | No stated policy. | Yes – the Green Party's 2019 manifesto committed to 'Retain the Human Rights Act and reaffirm the UK's commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights.' |

³ Liberal Democrats, *The Role of Faith in State-Funded Schools*, March 2017. <http://www.libdems.org.uk/conference-spring-17-f16-faith-schools>

⁴ Green Party Policy, <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/ed.html>

⁵ Welsh Government Statement issued 3 March 2021 in response to Wales Humanists.

⁶ Confirmed by the leader of Plaid Cymru during party conference October 2019 in response to Wales Humanists.

⁸ Liberal Democrats, 'Our human rights are under attack' 10 December 2020. <https://www.libdems.org.uk/human-rights-under-attack>

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| | Labour remains committed to freedom of conscience and freedom of belief... and have a proud history fighting for equality and human rights'. ⁷ | security and effective government.' | written charter of citizens' rights and responsibilities, based on a national citizenship of equals which embraces inclusion and diversity'. | | | |
| Would you support legalising assisted dying for people who are of sound mind but are terminally ill or incurably suffering? | MPs in Westminster are allowed a free vote on the matter, so presumably MSs are too. | MPs in Westminster are allowed a free vote on the matter, so presumably MSs are too. | No stated policy. | Yes – party policy states that 'medical assistance to die should be available to patients in particular circumstances', however, 'any such legislative proposal should be determined by way of a free vote'. ⁹ | No stated policy. | Yes – the Green Party 'believe that people have a right to an assisted death within an agreed framework' ¹⁰ |

About Humanists UK

Wales Humanists is part of Humanists UK. Humanists UK is the national charity working on behalf of non-religious people. Powered by 100,000 members and supporters, we advance free thinking and promote humanism to create a tolerant society where rational thinking and kindness prevail. We provide ceremonies, pastoral care, education, and support services benefitting over a million people every year and our campaigns advance humanist thinking on ethical issues, human rights, and equal treatment for all.

Wales Humanists and Humanists UK are independent of all political parties and does not support, fund or advocate any particular political party.

All party policies come from the respective party manifestos unless a specific reference is given. Where policies are not stated we contacted the parties to seek further clarity and the table incorporates any replies we received. If you spot something where you think we've got it wrong, or have missed a piece of information, then please do contact us. Some of the issues we discuss are not devolved to Wales and so the policies are aimed at the UK Government in Westminster and not the Welsh Government.

You can find out more about our election work, including how to write to your prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) about these issues, at <https://humanists.uk/senedd2021/>.

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⁷ Welsh Labour statement in response to Wales Humanists request 3 April 2021.

⁹ Liberal Democrats 2012 Federal Conference report motion on 'Medically Assisted Dying' http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/2012/attachments/original/1390841944/Conference_Report_Brighton_2012.pdf

¹⁰ The Green Party, *Health Policy*. <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/he.html>