

National Assembly for Wales

Local Election Results 2012 May 2012

This paper presents the results of the local elections held on 3 May 2012. Figures are provided on overall control of councils, the number of seats won by each political party and the size of majorities in councils.

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Local Election Results 2012
May 2012

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Research
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Executive Summary

- Local elections took place in 21 of the 22 Welsh unitary authorities on 3 May 2012. The exception was the Isle of Anglesey, where elections have been postponed until May 2013. **All figures in this paper are for the 21 authorities where elections were held in 2012 and do not include the Isle of Anglesey.**
- The number of councils controlled by Labour increased from 2 in 2008 to 10 in 2012. Labour also increased the number of seats it holds from 340 in 2008 to 577 in 2012. Labour increased the number of seats from the number held in 2008 in 19 of the 21 authorities where elections took place.
- Independents were a majority of councillors in 2 of the 21 authorities where elections took place in 2012, compared to 3 in 2008. There was a decrease in the number of seats held by independent councillors from 323 in 2008 to 293 in 2012.
- The Conservatives lost control of the two councils they held in 2008. After the 2012 elections they held 105 seats, compared to 172 in 2008.
- Plaid Cymru did not win overall control of any council, and held 158 seats in 2012, decreasing from 197 in 2008.
- The Liberal Democrats also did not win overall control of any of the councils, and the number of seats they held decreased from 164 in 2008 to 72 in 2012.
- In 2012, councillors were elected unopposed in 98 of the 1,223 seats (8.0%) where elections were held.
- **No turnout figures are included in this paper as figures for all local authorities are not available as yet.** These calculations are complicated by multi-member wards in some councils and uncontested seats, and figures are expected to be available later this year.

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Local Elections 2012

1. Introduction

On 3 May 2012, local elections were held in 21 of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales. On the same day, elections were held in 128 English councils, while in London, elections were held for the London Assembly and London Mayor. In addition, elections were held in all 32 of the Scottish local authorities. **This paper gives a summary of the results of the local elections held in Wales.**

Local elections were held in all Welsh unitary authorities except for the Isle of Anglesey. In November 2011 the Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant AM, announced that he was minded to change the year of ordinary elections of councillors in Anglesey from May 2012 to May 2013, subject to consultation with stakeholders.¹ The reason given for this was that following the report and recommendations from the Auditor General for Wales, the Minister had asked the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements in the Isle of Anglesey. As publication of the Commission's final report was delayed, the Minister concluded that he would not be able to give it consideration ahead of the May 2012 elections.²

In January 2012 the Minister confirmed this decision following the consultation,³ and brought forward *The Isle of Anglesey Local Authorities (Change to the Years of Ordinary Elections) Order 2012*⁴ to implement this, meaning that **local elections in the Isle of Anglesey will be held in May 2013.**

Data sources used for the 2012 elections

The statistics in this paper have been compiled from websites of the relevant local authority, and have been validated against the BBC website. **The paper includes comparisons of the 2012 results with the position after the 2008 local election,** as published in the Research Service paper *Local Election Results 2008 (updated)*.⁵ **It does not take into account any by-elections or changes in political affiliation of councillors which may have taken place since then.** The changes in numbers of seats held by parties on the BBC website are from

¹ Welsh Government, Carl Sargeant (Minister for Local Government and Communities), [*Proposal to change the year of Local Government election in Anglesey*](#), Cabinet Written Statement, 22 November 2011 [accessed 16 April 2012]

² Ibid.

³ Welsh Government, Carl Sargeant (Minister for Local Government and Communities), [*Delaying the year of Local Government election in Anglesey*](#), Cabinet Written Statement, 17 January 2012 [accessed 16 April 2012]

⁴ [*The Isle of Anglesey Local Authorities \(Change to the Years of Ordinary Elections\) Order 2012*](#), SI 2012/686 (W.94) [accessed 16 April 2012]

⁵ Research Service, [*Local Election Results 2008 \(updated\)*](#), June 2008 [accessed 16 April 2012]

immediately before the 2012 election, and so will not correspond to the figures in this paper.

Due to the elections in the Isle of Anglesey being delayed for a year, these comparisons do not include figures for 2008 elections held in the Isle of Anglesey.

Control is attributed on a numerical basis, being allocated to the party or group that holds the majority of the seats. Authorities with minority administrations or coalitions are considered to be under no overall control. Between the 2008 and 2012 local elections, Plaid Cymru gained overall control of Gwynedd Council following by-election victories in October 2011 which meant that it held the majority of the seats.⁶ **Changes in control between the 2008 and 2012 elections are not reflected within the paper.**

Seats are allocated as 'Independent' if a candidate listed themselves as 'independent' (or 'annibynnol' in Welsh) on their nomination form or did not give a party. 'Independent groups' are also included in this category. The 'Other' category includes all other parties, and further information on these is available in the explanatory notes section of this paper

⁶ Wales Online, [Plaid regains control of Gwynedd council after by-election wins](#), 1 October 2011 [accessed 18 April 2012]

2. Council Control

Of the 21 Welsh local authorities where elections took place in 2012, **Labour** increased the number of councils it controls from 2 to 10, gaining control of a further 8 councils and retaining the 2 it controlled after the 2008 election.

Nine councils were under **no overall control** (NOC) in 2012, this decreased from 14 in 2008.

Independents were the majority group in two councils, compared to three in 2008.

The **Conservatives** lost control of the two councils they controlled in 2008.

Figure 1: Councils controlled after 2012 elections

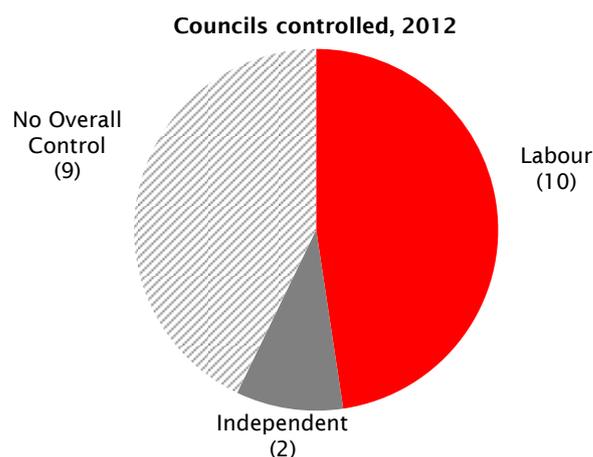


Table 1: Number of councils controlled, by party (a)

Party	2008	2012	Change
Conservative	2	0	-2
Labour	2	10	8
Liberal Democrat	0	0	0
Plaid Cymru	0	0	0
Independent (a)	3	2	-1
NOC	14	9	-5

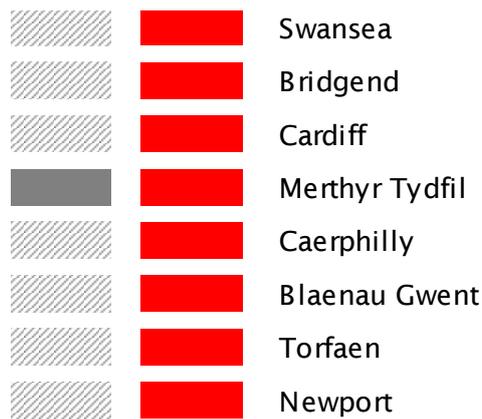
Note:

- (a) The Isle of Anglesey has not been included in these figures due to its elections being postponed from 2012 to 2013. Independent councillors are the majority group on the Isle of Anglesey.

Changes in Council Control

The coloured blocks below show the controlling party at the 2008 and 2012 elections for those authorities where changes took place in 2012.

Labour gains



Losses to No Overall Control



A breakdown of political control in the 21 authorities where elections took place in both 2008 and 2012 is provided below.

Table 2: Political control of unitary authorities and change from 2008

Local Authority	2008	2012		Change
Gwynedd (a)			No Overall Control	No Change (a)
Conwy			No Overall Control	No Change
Denbighshire			No Overall Control	No Change
Flintshire			No Overall Control	No Change
Wrexham			No Overall Control	No Change
Powys			Independent	No Change
Ceredigion			No Overall Control	No Change
Pembrokeshire			Independent	No Change
Carmarthenshire			No Overall Control	No Change
Swansea			Labour	From No Overall Control
Neath Port Talbot			Labour	No Change
Bridgend			Labour	From No Overall Control
Vale of Glamorgan			No Overall Control	From Conservative
Cardiff			Labour	From No Overall Control
Rhondda Cynon Taf			Labour	No Change
Merthyr Tydfil			Labour	From Independent
Caerphilly			Labour	From No Overall Control
Blaenau Gwent			Labour	From No Overall Control
Torfaen			Labour	From No Overall Control
Monmouthshire			No Overall Control	From Conservative
Newport			Labour	From No Overall Control

Note:

- (a) An election in one seat in Gwynedd did not take place as no candidates were nominated. Should Plaid Cymru win this seat they will have overall control of Gwynedd.

Figure 2: Map of unitary authorities by controlling party/group, after 2008 elections

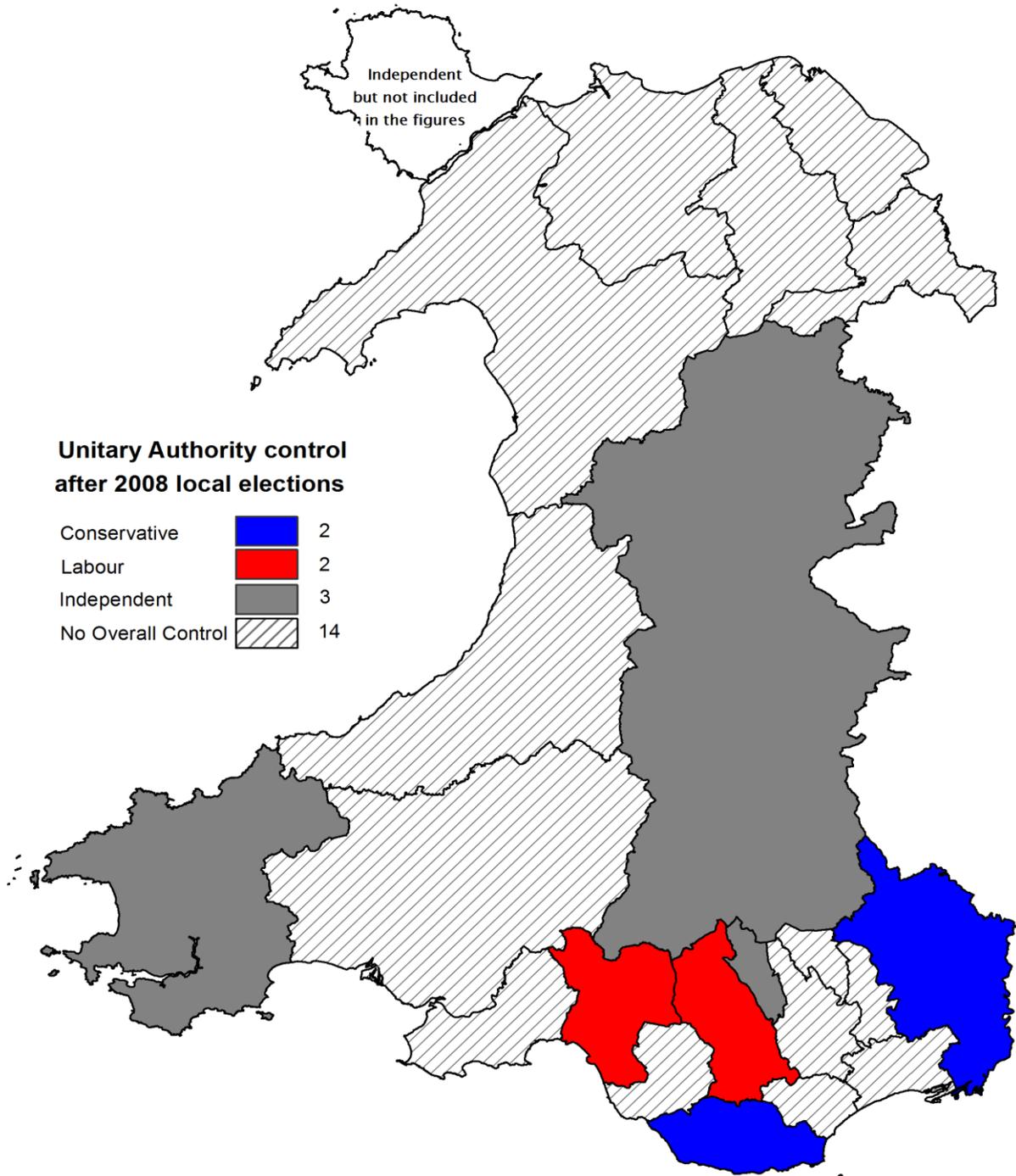
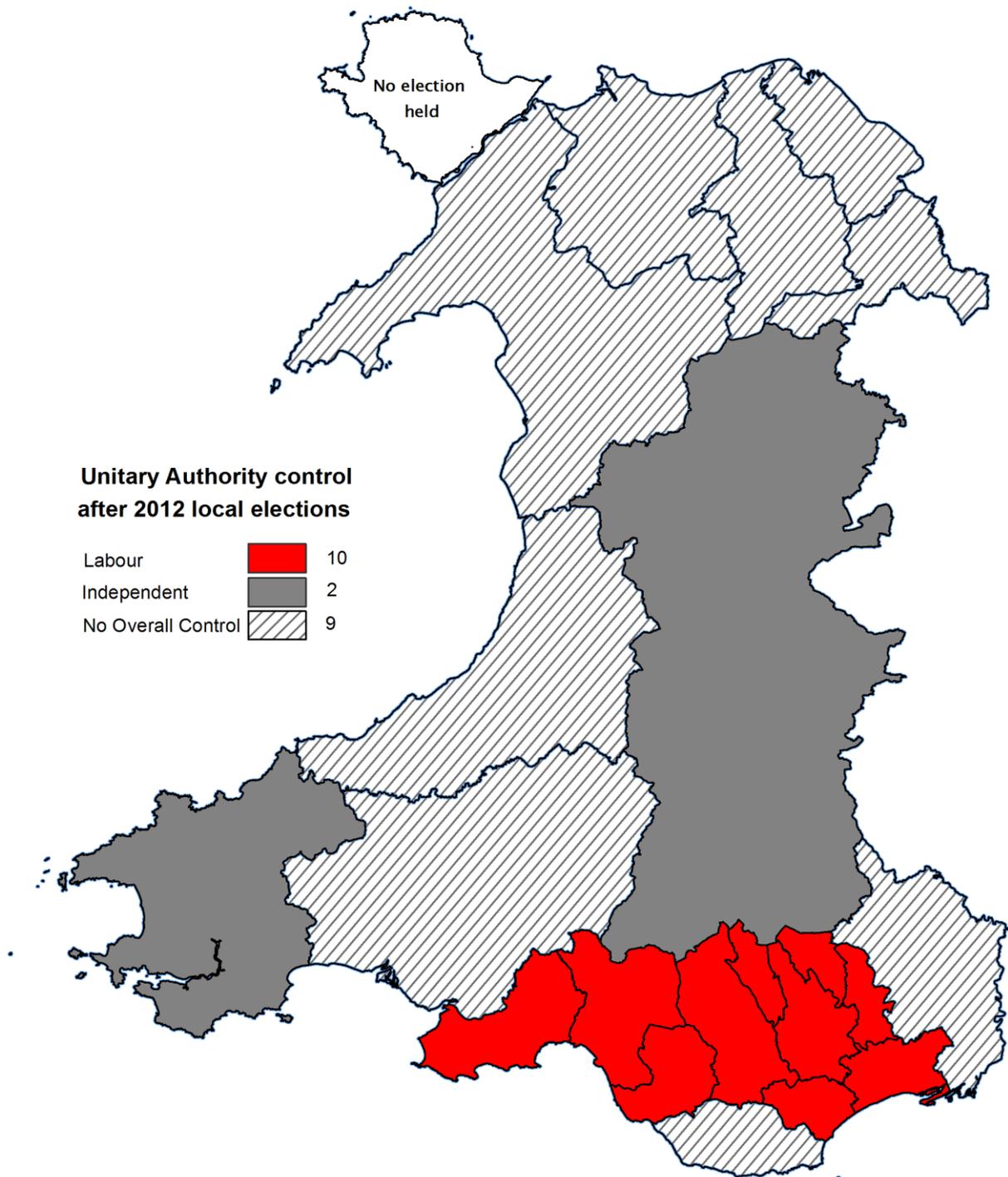


Figure 3: Map of unitary authorities by controlling party/group, after 2012 elections



3. Safe and Marginal Councils

The two tables below show the safest and most marginal councils of those where one party/group is in control. Figures are given for both absolute and percentage majorities. The explanatory notes section of this paper gives information how each of these are calculated. Using the absolute majority does not take into account differences in the size of councils and the number of seats available, so figures for percentage majorities have also been included in order to take into account these differences.

Neath Port Talbot council has the largest percentage majority, with Labour holding a majority of 62.5%, while **Rhondda Cynon Taf** council has the largest absolute majority with Labour holding a majority of 45 seats.

Labour in **Cardiff** council has the lowest percentage majority of 22.7%, while Labour in **Merthyr Tydfil** council holds the lowest absolute majority of 13 seats.

Table 3: Safest and most marginal councils, by percentage majority

<u>Local Authority</u>	<u>Control</u>	<u>% Majority</u>
Neath Port Talbot	Labour 	62.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Labour 	60.0
Blaenau Gwent	Labour 	57.1
Newport	Labour 	48.0
Bridgend	Labour 	44.4
Pembrokeshire	Independent 	40.0
Merthyr Tydfil	Labour 	39.4
Caerphilly	Labour 	37.0
Torfaen	Labour 	36.4
Swansea	Labour 	36.1
Powys	Independent 	31.5
Cardiff	Labour 	22.7

Table 4: Safest and most marginal councils, by absolute majority

Local Authority	Control	Majority
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Labour 	45
Neath Port Talbot	Labour 	40
Caerphilly	Labour 	27
Swansea	Labour 	26
Pembrokeshire	Independent 	24
Bridgend	Labour 	24
Blaenau Gwent	Labour 	24
Newport	Labour 	24
Powys	Independent 	23
Cardiff	Labour 	17
Torfaen	Labour 	16
Merthyr Tydfil	Labour 	13

4. Council Seats

Across the 21 local authorities where elections took place, **Labour** won 577 seats, 237 more than in 2008.

Independent candidates won 293 seats; this was 30 less than in 2008.

Plaid Cymru won 158 seats, 39 less than in 2008.

The **Conservatives** won 105 seats, 67 fewer than in 2008.

The **Liberal Democrats** won 72 seats, a decrease of 92 seats compared to 2008.

Candidates from other parties won 18 seats, 10 fewer than in 2008. Of these 18 seats, 13 were won by Llais Gwynedd, 2 by the UK Independence Party, 1 by People First, 1 by the People's Representative and 1 by the Social Democratic Party.

The figures in this paper compare the number of councillors after the 2012 election with the number after the election in 2008, and so will differ from the numbers on the BBC website, which compares the number of councillors before and after the 2012 elections.

Figure 4: Share of seats won, 2012 (per cent)

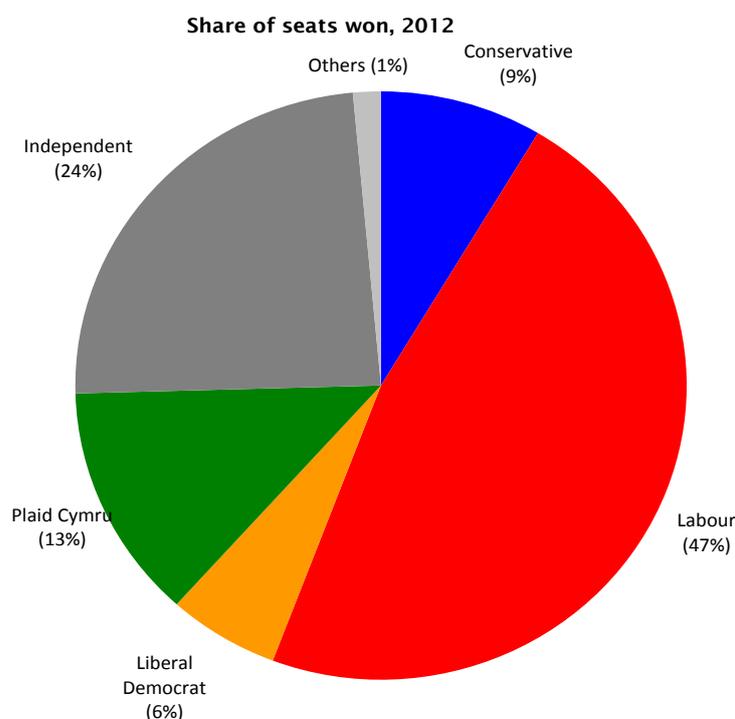


Table 5: Number of seats won, by party

Party	2008	2012	Change	Percentage change in seats held
Conservative	172	105	-67	-39.0
Labour	340	577	237	69.7
Liberal Democrat	164	72	-92	-56.1
Plaid Cymru	197	158	-39	-19.8
Independent	323	293	-30	-9.3
Others	28	18	-10	-35.7

A breakdown of the number of seats won by unitary authority and party is provided below along with a breakdown of the changes in the number of seats won by party for each unitary authority. Information on the number of seats where councillors were elected unopposed is available in Section 6 of this paper.

Table 6: Number of seats won, by unitary authority and party, 2012

Local Authority	Con	Lab	LD	PC	Ind	Other
Gwynedd (a)	0	4	2	37	18	13
Conwy	13	10	5	12	19	0
Denbighshire	9	18	1	7	12	0
Flintshire	8	31	7	1	23	0
Wrexham	5	23	4	1	19	0
Powys	10	6	9	0	48	0
Ceredigion	0	1	7	19	15	0
Pembrokeshire	3	9	1	5	42	0
Carmarthenshire	0	23	0	28	22	1
Swansea	4	49	12	0	6	1
Neath Port Talbot	0	52	0	8	3	1
Bridgend	1	39	3	1	10	0
Vale of Glamorgan	11	22	0	6	7	1
Cardiff	7	46	16	2	4	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	60	1	9	4	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	23	0	0	9	1
Caerphilly	0	50	0	20	3	0
Blaenau Gwent	0	33	0	0	9	0
Torfaen	4	30	0	2	8	0
Monmouthshire	19	11	3	0	10	0
Newport	10	37	1	0	2	0
Total	105	577	72	158	293	18

Note:

- (a) An election did not take place in the seat of Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel in Gwynedd due to no candidates being nominated. A by-election will take place at a future date.
- (b) The party or group with the largest number of seats in each authority is denoted in **bold** type.

In addition to being in overall control of 10 of the 21 authorities in which elections took place in 2012, **Labour** is the biggest party in a further 4 authorities. **Plaid Cymru** holds most seats in three authorities, and the **Conservatives** do in one authority, although neither party holds overall control in any of these authorities. **Independents** hold a majority of seats in two authorities, and also hold more seats than any other party/group in a further authority.

Table 7: Changes in number of seats won, compared to 2008, by unitary authority

Local Authority	Control		Change in number of seats from 2008					
	2008	2012	Con	Lab	LD	PC	Ind	Other
Gwynedd (a)			0	0	-3	2	0	0
Conwy			-9	3	1	0	5	0
Denbighshire			-9	11	0	-1	-1	0
Flintshire			-1	9	-5	0	-3	0
Wrexham			0	12	-8	-3	-1	0
Powys			1	2	-6	0	3	0
Ceredigion			0	0	-3	0	3	0
Pembrokeshire			-2	4	-2	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire			0	12	-1	-2	-10	1
Swansea			0	19	-11	-1	-7	0
Neath Port Talbot			0	15	-4	-3	-3	-5
Bridgend			-5	12	-8	0	1	0
Vale of Glamorgan			-14	9	0	0	4	1
Cardiff			-10	33	-19	-5	1	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf			0	16	-3	-11	-2	0
Merthyr Tydfil			0	15	-6	0	-10	1
Caerphilly			0	18	0	-12	-6	0
Blaenau Gwent			0	16	-2	0	-9	-5
Torfaen			-1	12	-2	-1	-5	-3
Monmouthshire			-10	4	-2	-1	9	0
Newport			-7	15	-8	-1	1	0
Total			-67	237	-92	-39	-30	-10

Note:

- The figures for total changes in Gwynedd do not cancel out to zero due to the election in Bryncriug/Llanfihangel not being held as no candidates stood for election.
- Where the number of seats held by a party is higher in 2012 than in 2008, this increase is denoted in **bold** type. Where the number of seats held by a party is lower in 2012 than 2008, this decrease is shown in **red**.

It can be seen that:

- **Labour** increased the number of seats it held in 19 authorities, and the number of seats held remained constant in the other 2 authorities.
- The **Conservatives** increased their number of seats in 1 authority, while the total number of seats they held fell in 10 authorities.
- The **Liberal Democrats** increased the number of seats in 1 authority, while the total number of seats they held fell in 17 authorities.
- **Plaid Cymru** increased their number of seats in 1 authority, while the total number of seats they held fell in 11 authorities.
- The number of seats held by **Independent** candidates increased in 8 authorities, and decreased in 11 authorities.

5. Performance of incumbent Council leaders

Incumbent Council leaders in 7 of the 21 unitary authorities where elections took place lost their seat. Of these, 2 were **Independents** and 2 were **Liberal Democrats**, with the **Conservatives**, **Labour** and **Plaid Cymru** all losing 1 incumbent leader.

Of the 7 incumbent leaders who lost their seats, 3 lost their seats to **Labour**, 3 to **Independent** candidates and 1 to **Plaid Cymru**.

Table 8: Performance of incumbent Council leaders, by unitary authority (a)

Local Authority	Incumbent leader of authority	Party		Seat	Outcome of election
Gwynedd	Cllr Dyfed Edwards	Plaid Cymru		Penygroes	Retained seat by 146 votes
Conwy	Cllr Dilwyn Roberts	Plaid Cymru		Llangemyw	Retained seat by 419 votes
Denbighshire	Cllr Hugh Evans	Independent		Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd / Gwyddelwern	Retained seat unopposed
Flintshire	Cllr Arnold Woolley	Independent		Buckley Bistre East	Retained seat by 254 votes
Wrexham	Cllr Ron Davies	Liberal Democrat		Little Acton	Lost seat to Independent by 9 votes
Powys	Cllr Michael E Jones	Independent		Old Radnor	Retained seat by 41 votes
Ceredigion	Cllr Keith Evans	Independent		Llandysul Town	Lost seat to Plaid Cymru by 102 votes
Pembrokeshire	Cllr John Davies	Independent		Gilgerran	Retained seat by 700 votes
Carmarthenshire	Cllr Meryl Gravell	Independent		Trimsaran	Retained seat by 101 votes
Swansea	Cllr Chris Holley	Liberal Democrat		Cwmbwrla	Retained seat by 80 votes
Neath Port Talbot	Cllr Ali Thomas	Labour		Onllwyn	Retained seat by 232 votes
Bridgend	Cllr Mel Nott	Labour		Sam	Retained seat by 400 votes
Vale of Glamorgan	Cllr Gordon Kemp	Conservative		Rhoose	Lost seat to Independent by 155 votes
Cardiff	Cllr Rodney Berman	Liberal Democrat		Plasnewydd	Lost seat to Labour by 51 votes
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Cllr Russell Roberts	Labour		Tonyrefail East	Lost seat to Independent by 53 votes
Merthyr Tydfil	Cllr Jeff Edwards	Independent		Merthyr Vale	Lost seat to Labour by 254 votes
Caerphilly	Cllr Allan Pritchard	Plaid Cymru		Penmaen	Lost seat to Labour by 362 votes
Blaenau Gwent	Cllr John Mason	Independent		Nantyglo	Retained seat by 15 votes
Torfaen	Cllr Robert Wellington	Labour		Greenmeadow	Retained seat by 60 votes
Monmouthshire	Cllr Peter Fox	Conservative		Portskewett	Retained seat by 75 votes
Newport	Cllr Matthew Evans	Conservative		Allt-yr-yn	Retained seat by 322 votes

Note:

(a) Incumbent leaders who lost their seat at the 2012 elections are highlighted in **bold** type.

6. Uncontested Seats

Uncontested seats occur when only one nomination for a seat is received, therefore allowing the nominee to be elected without a ballot being called. In total, 99 seats were uncontested across the 21 Welsh authorities where elections took place in 2012. In one of these seats, Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel in Gwynedd, no candidates were nominated after the incumbent councillor stood down, so no election took place on 3 May. A by-election will take place at a future date.⁷

Therefore, councillors were elected unopposed in 98 seats across the 21 Welsh authorities where elections took place in 2012, representing 8.0% of all seats where elections took place.

Powys had the highest proportion of uncontested seats, with 31.5% of its seats being elected uncontested, while 25.7% of seats in **Gwynedd** were elected uncontested (not including Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel). Eight authorities had no uncontested seats.

With 31 seats, **independent** candidates won the most uncontested seats. Of the major Welsh political parties, **Labour** won 23 uncontested seats and **Plaid Cymru** won 22.

Table 9: Number and percentage of uncontested seats by unitary authority, and winning party

Local Authority	Number of Councillors elected unopposed	Total number of seats up for election	Percentage of seats uncontested	Number of uncontested seats won by:					
				Con	Lab	LD	PC	Ind	Other
Gwynedd (a)	19	74	25.7	0	1	1	12	5	0
Conwy	6	59	10.2	1	0	0	4	1	0
Denbighshire	4	47	8.5	0	0	0	3	1	0
Flintshire	8	70	11.4	2	4	1	0	1	0
Wrexham	3	52	5.8	0	0	0	0	3	0
Powys	23	73	31.5	6	2	3	0	12	0
Ceredigion	2	42	4.8	0	0	0	1	1	0
Pembrokeshire	13	60	21.7	1	2	1	2	7	0
Cardiff	0	75	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swansea	0	72	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	4	64	6.3	0	4	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	5	54	9.3	0	5	0	0	0	0
Vale of Glamorgan	0	47	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cardiff	0	75	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	75	1.3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	33	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caerphilly	4	73	5.5	0	4	0	0	0	0
Blaenau Gwent	0	42	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Torfaen	0	44	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	6	43	14.0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	0	50	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	98	1,223	8.0	16	23	6	22	31	0

Notes:

- (a) There are 75 council seats in Gwynedd; however an election did not take place in Bryn-crug/Llanfihangel due to no candidates being nominated. This seat is not included in the uncontested seats as no councillor was elected.

⁷ BBC Wales, [Local elections: Gwynedd council ward has no candidates](#), 5 April 2012 [accessed 16 April 2012]

7. Explanatory notes

Key to party codes

Code		Party
Con		Conservative
Lab		Labour
LD		Liberal Democrat
PC		Plaid Cymru
Ind		Independent
LG		Llais Gwynedd
PF		People First
PR		The People's Representative
SDP		Social Democratic Party
UKIP		UK Independence Party

Each party has a short code and colours have been assigned to the main parties and groups of parties. Independent groups (Merthyr Independents and Llantwit First Independents) are grouped together under the 'Independent' label with all other independent candidates. Remaining parties are assigned a light grey colour. In the majority of tables these smaller parties are grouped together under the 'Other' label.

Percentage and absolute majorities - worked examples

Majority is calculated in this paper using two different methods. Absolute majority is calculated by taking the number of seats won by the controlling party and subtracting from this the number of seats won by the other parties. For example, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Labour won 60 seats and the other parties won 15 seats.

$$60 - 15 = 45$$

Therefore Labour has an absolute majority of 45 seats in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Using the absolute majority can be misleading in some circumstances as it does not take into account any differences in the size of councils and the number of seats available. The percentage majority uses the total number of seats in a council as part of the calculation. It is calculated by dividing the absolute majority by the total number of seats in the council and then multiplying this figure by 100. For example, there are 75 seats on Rhondda Cynon Taf council and the absolute majority of Labour was 45.

$$45 \div 75 = 0.6$$

$$0.6 \times 100 = 60.0$$

Therefore Labour has a percentage majority of 60.0% in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

It can be seen that some councils hold roughly the same ranked position regardless of the type of majority used, however the rankings of other councils change a number of places depending on whether the percentage or absolute majority is used. Typically, authorities with a greater number of councillors such as **Cardiff** and **Caerphilly** are ranked higher in terms of absolute majorities and lower in terms of percentage majorities. Conversely, authorities with a smaller number of councillors such as **Blaenau Gwent** and **Merthyr Tydfil** are ranked higher in terms of percentage majorities and lower in terms of absolute majorities.