



Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Boundary Commission for Wales

Guide to the Public Hearings

2023 Review of Parliamentary
Constituencies



This document is available in Welsh
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and telephone calls in Welsh or English.

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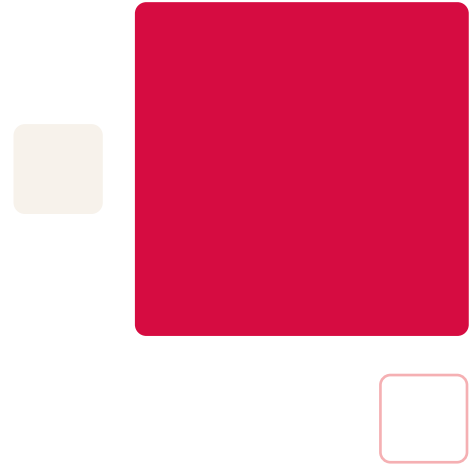
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This document is also available from our website at www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk

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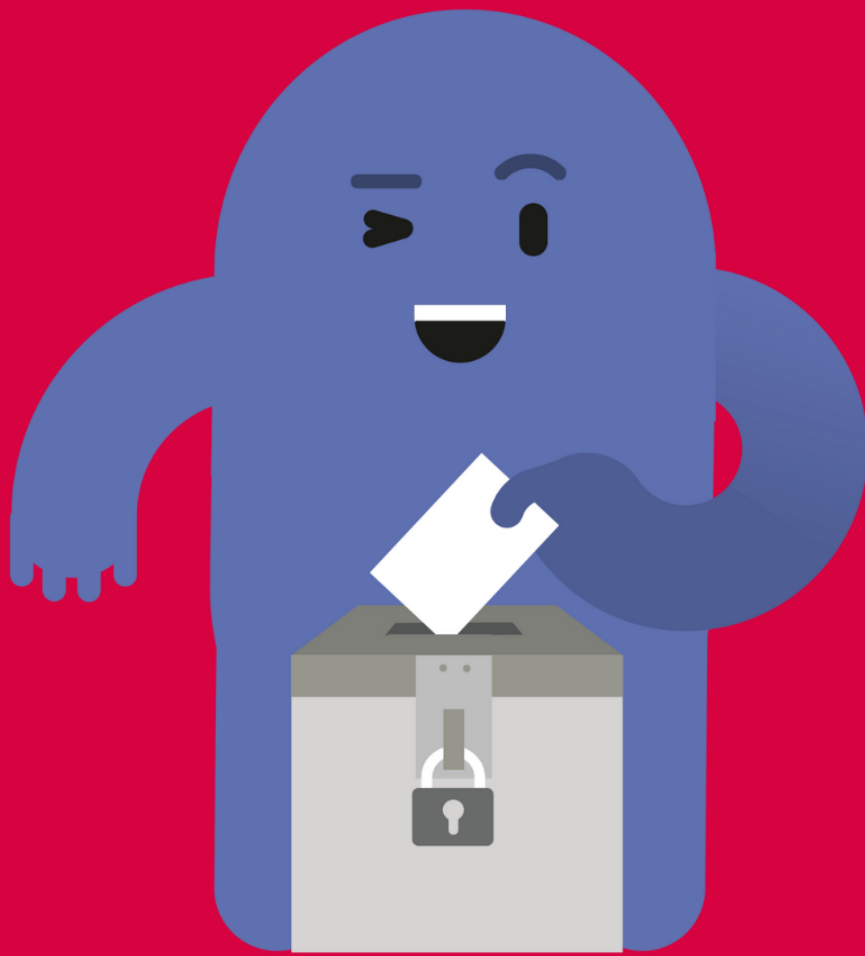
Background and Purpose of this Guide



The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) is the statutory framework the Commission is directed to abide by for the purpose of reviewing Parliamentary constituencies in Wales.

The Schedule from this Act, included as Appendix 1, sets out certain rules relating to the public hearings. Subject to those rules, the conduct of the Commission's public hearings will be a matter for the discretion of the chair of a public hearing. To ensure consistency of policy, procedure and practice, and to aid in the smooth running of the hearings, the Commission has provided guidance for the appointed chairs of the public hearings and this guidance for the public.

Each hearing will be chaired by an independent Assistant Commissioner, who will manage proceedings. The chair may decide on the order in which participants are invited to speak, the time allotted to individual speakers, and (if necessary due to shortage of time) on who is permitted to speak. The chair will also manage the questioning of individuals making representations and others at the hearing.



Purpose of hearings

A public hearing is intended to provide an opportunity for people to make representations about any of the Commission's initial proposals (including the naming of constituencies), present any counterproposals, and comment on counterproposals that may have been put forward by others during the initial consultation period.

Number, locations and dates of hearings

The Commission will be holding five public hearings which is the maximum allowed by the legislation.

The locations of these hearings, spread across Wales, have been chosen to ensure the maximum coverage and accessibility. The public hearings will be held at the following locations, venues and dates:

Location	Venue	Date
Cardiff	Mercure Holland House, Cardiff CF24 0DD	17 February 2022
Wrexham	Ramada Plaza, Wrexham LL13 7YH	23 February 2022
Swansea	Grand Hotel, Swansea SA1 1NX	1 March 2022
Bangor	Management Centre, Bangor LL57 2DG	9 March 2022
Aberystwyth	Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth SY23 2DA	30 March 2022

Attendance at the hearings

To enable the Commission to manage the hearings effectively, all contributors are requested to book a speaking slot in advance. If you would like to request a speaking slot in the public hearings please write to the Boundary Commission for Wales, Hastings House, Fitzalan Court, Cardiff CF24 0BL, fax to 029 2046 4823, or email bcw@boundaries.wales

In your request we would be grateful if you would include:

- Your name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Affiliation (if you are speaking on behalf of your organisation)
- Hearing(s) you would like to attend (in order of preference)
- The date(s) and session(s) you would be available to participate in (in order of preference).

The sessions are split into morning (8am–12 noon), afternoon (1pm–4.30pm) and evening (5pm–7.50pm) slots.

Speaking slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

All those requests will receive an acknowledgement.

Approximately one week prior to the public hearing those requesting attendance will be contacted and given an approximate time slot. In addition to this, in order to aid the translators and transcribers, participants will be requested to provide their speaking note in advance. This is not compulsory but would

greatly aid the smooth running of the hearings.

Facilities will be available at each venue to provide an electronic presentation. If a participant wishes to make a presentation, this will need to be provided in advance to ensure it is compatible with the software at the venue. If it is not provided in advance the Commission cannot guarantee that a participant will be able to make the electronic presentation.

In the event of exceptionally high demand to speak at a public hearing it may be the case that a second preference/another public hearing venue slot will be offered in place of the one a participant would prefer. Whilst the Commission will strive to avoid such difficulties, the Commission cannot guarantee that a participant will be able to make representations at their preferred time, date or venue.

Media

Representatives of the media may be present at a public hearing and may wish to record opening statements or conduct interviews in or around the hearing venue. It is at the chair's discretion as to what they will or will not be allowed to record of the hearing. Media enquiries will be dealt with upon request.

Live Streaming

The public hearings will be live streamed on the Commission's website to allow people to have greater access to the hearings. Persons who wish to make representations at a hearing but who do not wish those representations to be recorded and live streamed are asked to make that known to the Commission as early as possible.

Social Media

Those in attendance of the hearing may wish to tweet, message or text during a hearing, or part of a hearing. On the condition this is done when the device is silent this is allowed. However, photography will be prohibited but may be permitted at the chair's discretion and will be dealt with upon request.

The chair will reserve the right to ask people to refrain from any activity that they may consider is disruptive to proceedings.

Procedure at hearings

Length

The hearings will begin at 8am and close at 8pm. It is hoped that this will give members of the public as much opportunity as possible to make representations to the Commission.

Recording and Transcription

A transcription of each public hearing will be made available on the Commission's website. Therefore, all parts of the hearing must be recorded via the microphones provided. This may mean that participants are asked to repeat what has been said into the microphone for the record even if it has been heard by the chair and other participants and attendees. The transcriptions of the public hearings will be published on the Commission's website as soon as possible following the end of the secondary consultation period. The transcriptions will be made available and published on the Commission's website in due course.

Translation

At each public hearing venue there will be the facility for contributions to be made in Welsh.

Commencement

The chair will open the hearing with a short introduction to the day, which will include how the hearing will be carried out.

Following the introduction, the Commission's secretariat will provide a short presentation which will include an explanation of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

The presentation by the secretariat will not be an opportunity for those present to ask questions of the Commission or secretariat on the initial proposals.

Political Party Representations

At the first hearing, the political parties with representation in the Welsh Parliament will be allocated a longer speaking slot at the start of the hearing to set out their proposals for the whole of the country. This longer speaking slot allows the political parties to address the whole of the country – however, it should be made clear that the BCW otherwise places no more weight on the representations from the political parties than from anyone else.

Running Order of Representations

Approximately one week prior to the public hearing, the secretariat of the Commission will inform the participants of their slot. This running order will be listed on or near the front desk at each public hearing. This will also be made available on the Commission's website.

Representations

As far as possible, speakers will be called out in the agreed order. For the purposes of translation,

speakers will be asked to confirm whether the representations will be made in Welsh or English. For the purposes of recording, the chair will ask the speaker to confirm their name, interest (political association, etc.) and, if appropriate, place of residence.

Following the representation, the speaker may be asked by the chair to clarify certain points. Requests for clarification by those present may be made only through the chair. The chair will decide whether those requests for clarification should be put to the speaker.

The Commission suggests that questioning of speakers be limited to points of clarification and that cross-examination should not be permitted. For the purposes of recording, the chair will ask the person seeking clarification to confirm their name, interest (political association, etc.) and, if appropriate, the area of residence, prior to asking a question.

Publication and personal data

The Commission will publish a full transcript of each of the public hearings including the name and affiliation (if any) of the speaker. Personal details such as home address and personal contact details will be redacted.

Appendix 1

SCHEDULE 2A

PUBLIC HEARINGS ABOUT BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS

Purpose of hearings

1 The purpose of a public hearing is to enable representations to be made about any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

Number of hearings

2 (1) In relation to any particular report under section 3(1)(a) of this Act—

(a) the Boundary Commission for England shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in each English region;

(b) the Boundary Commission for Scotland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Scotland;

(c) the Boundary Commission for Wales shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Wales;

(d) the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland shall cause at least two and no more than five public hearings to be held in Northern Ireland.

(2) The public hearings in an English region shall be concerned with proposals for that region, and shall between them cover the whole region.

(3) The public hearings in Scotland shall be concerned with proposals for Scotland, and

shall between them cover the whole of Scotland.

(4) The public hearings in Wales shall be concerned with proposals for Wales, and shall between them cover the whole of Wales.

(5) The public hearings in Northern Ireland shall be concerned with proposals for Northern Ireland, and shall between them cover the whole of Northern Ireland.

Chair of hearing

3 For each public hearing the Boundary Commission concerned shall appoint a person to chair the hearing.

Length of hearings

4 A public hearing shall be completed within two days.

Procedure at hearings

5 It is for the chair of each public hearing to determine the procedure that is to govern that hearing.

6 The chair shall make arrangements for a public hearing to begin with an explanation of—

(a) the proposals with which the hearing is concerned;

(b) how written representations about the proposals may be made (as mentioned in section

5(1)(a), (4)(b), (4B)(b) or (5)(c) of this Act).

7 (1) The chair of a public hearing must allow representations to be made—

(a) by qualifying party;

(b) by any other persons (whether individuals or organisations) considered by the chair to have an interest in any of the proposals with which the hearing is concerned.

Paragraph (b) above has effect subject to sub-paragraph (3)(b) below.

(2) The chair may restrict the amount of time allowed for representations—

(a) by qualifying parties, and

(b) by other persons,

and need not allow the same amount to each.

(3) The chair may determine—

(a) the order in which representations are made, and

(b) if necessary because of shortage of time, which of those wishing to make representations are not allowed to do so, in whatever way the chair decides.

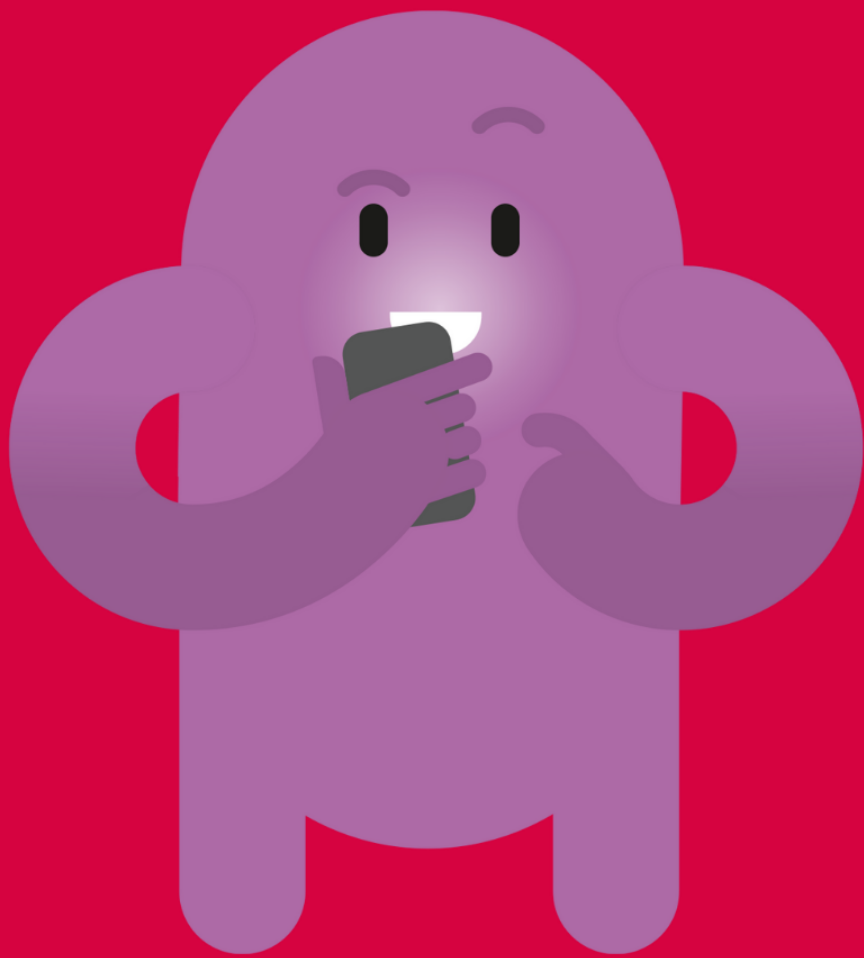
8 (1) The chair may put questions, or allow questions to be put, to a person present at the hearing.

(2) If questions are allowed to be put, the chair may regulate the manner of questioning or restrict the number of questions a person may ask.

Interpretation

9 In this Schedule—

- “the chair” means the person appointed under paragraph 3 above;
- “English region” means an electoral region specified in Schedule 1 to the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 (ignoring paragraph 2(2) of that Schedule and the references to Gibraltar) as it has effect on the day referred to in rule 5(2) of Schedule 2 to this Act;
- “public hearing” means a hearing under section 5(4)(c) of this Act;
- “qualifying party” means a party that is registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and either—
 - (a) has at least one Member of the House of Commons representing a constituency in the region, or (as the case may be) the part of the United Kingdom, in which the hearing is held, or
 - (b) received at least 10% of the votes cast in that region or part in the most recent parliamentary general election.





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