



Dawn Bowden MS | AS

Aelod o'r Senedd dros
Merthyr Tudful a Rhymni

Member of the Senedd for
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney

Senedd Cymru

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To: Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency
17th January 2025

STATEMENT BY DAWN BOWDEN MS: SENEDD ELCTIONS

Dear Friends,

In 2016 you gave me the great privilege of representing the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency in the Senedd, our Welsh Parliament. It was such an honour to be the first woman in this constituency to be elected in either the Senedd or Westminster elections. I also thank you for re-electing me in 2021 with an increased majority.

In nearly ten years as your MS, I have done my best to represent you, to promote the constituency and to support our local community. As promised I made my home in the constituency and I have run a highly visible constituency office to support the needs of constituents.

Thanks to Mark Drakeford, Vaughan Gething and Eluned Morgan I have also had the great honour of serving in our Welsh Government.

Senedd Elections

As you know preparations are now being made for the Senedd elections in 2026. These elections will be for a larger Senedd based on new boundaries. There will no longer be a Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency but a larger constituency served by six Members of the Senedd. A different system for a new era of Welsh politics.

After much consideration I have decided that I will **not** be a candidate in the 2026 elections.

Having left school at 16, and after working continuously for almost 50 years it will be a time for new challenges and different opportunities. I look forwards to having more time with our grandchildren and with my family, without the pressing and urgent

demands of daily politics.

Your Support

During my time as an AM, and now your MS, I have been supported by many constituents, local organisations, members of Welsh Labour, local councillors, trade unions including my own union Unison, the Co-operative Party and a great team of staff in my constituency. I have greatly valued my strong working partnership with Gerald Jones MP and since 2024 with Nick Smith MP in Rhymney.

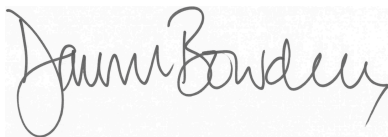
I will of course continue to serve you as the local MS, to serve our First Minister in Government and to do the best possible job until the next elections in May 2026.

But a special thanks must go to you - party members - and the voters of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney for having faith in me.

I send my best wishes to those who will stand to represent Welsh Labour in the new Senedd constituency in 2026. You will have my full support.

A fuller statement is attached to this letter and is also posted on my social media.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Dawn Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Yours Sincerely,

Dawn Bowden MS
Member of the Senedd for Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney

STATEMENT BY DAWN BOWDEN MS

January 17th 2025

Dear friends,

Thank you for the privilege

In 2016 you gave me the great privilege of representing the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency in the Senedd, our Welsh Parliament. It was such an honour to be the first woman, in either the Senedd or Westminster elections, to be elected in this constituency. I also thank you for re-electing me in 2021 with an increased majority.

In nearly ten years as your MS, I have done my best to represent you, to promote the constituency and to support our local community. As promised, I made my home in the constituency and I have run a highly visible constituency office to support the needs of constituents. I thank people for their warm welcome and the friendships we have found.

Thanks to our First Ministers: Mark Drakeford, Vaughan Gething and Eluned Morgan I also have the great honour to serve in our Welsh Government.

A new Senedd

As you know preparations are now being made for the Senedd elections in 2026. These elections will be for a larger Senedd based on new boundaries. There will no longer be a Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney constituency but a larger constituency served by six Members of the Senedd. A different system for a new era of Welsh politics.

After much consideration I have decided that I will not be a candidate in the 2026 elections.

Having left school at 16, and after working continuously for almost 50 years, for me it is now a time for new challenges and different opportunities. I look forward to more time with our grandchildren and with my family. I am not complaining but, I know, for too long they have had to take a back seat as I have dealt with the daily demands of politics and Government. I look forward to the opportunity for a different pace and focus in my life.

Your Support

During my time as an AM, and now MS, I have been supported by many constituents, local organisations, members of Welsh Labour, councillors, trade unions including my own union Unison, the Co-operative Party and a great team of staff in my constituency. I have greatly valued my strong working partnership with Gerald Jones MP and since 2024 with Nick Smith MP in Rhymney. I thank you all because without your support I would not have been able to do what I have done.

Much Achieved – Much Still to Do

In my time as your MS we have seen projects like:

- the investment in the Metro network, new stations built and new trains running on the Rhymney and Merthyr lines.
- The redevelopment of Prince Charles hospital.
- The A465 Heads of the Valleys road improvements.
- New schools built and school buildings redeveloped.
- A new bus station.
- The Rhydycar swimming pools refurbished.
- Business investment and town centre regeneration.
- Investment in important housing projects - including Bryn Carno in Rhymney - delivered.
- Vital support to help local community and Third Sector groups.

As always there is more to do and there will be much at stake in the 2026 elections. Those are the challenges to come for my successors in the Senedd.

Welsh Government

I am proud of the record of our Welsh Government. It is too easy to take for granted the long standing policies in support of free bus passes, free prescriptions and free hospital parking. These are political choices, they are Welsh Labour choices. The same principles put in to action that saw Wales retain EMA and provide free school meals to all primary school children. A commitment to retain and grow Flying Start and provide support in the first 1000 days of a child's life. A recognition of the climate crisis and seeking to focus investment in prevention and mitigation including investment in flood defences. We have started the process to modernise the law around coal tips in order to tackle the legacy of the coal industry. I am proud to be taking through legislation on removing private profit from the care of looked after children in care and improving their life chances.

We continue a proud record of investment in new and refurbished school buildings across Wales. We have delivered major investment to start turning around the neglect of our rail system.

In my term of office as your MS we all faced the unparalleled demands of the global covid pandemic and I still think of those who lost loved ones to the virus. In spite of the huge efforts of front line staff, along with record investment, our Welsh NHS and care services are still seeking to recover. But it remains a service to be proud of and to protect and promote in future.

There were other significant problems that took much time and energy to address. I know that I could not solve every problem put before me but, I hope, people can accept that is not for any lack of effort.

The work goes on

I will of course continue to serve you and to do my best until the next election. I thank you all, especially the party members and the voters of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney.

I send my best wishes to those who will stand to represent Welsh Labour in 2026. You will have my full support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dawn Bowden MS

Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney.

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