



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Publication of the 2020 Electoral Register**

DATE **16 June 2020**

BY **Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government**

I want to inform you of Welsh Government's intention to lay draft regulations for approval by the Senedd, which would allow Electoral Registration Officers in Wales flexibility in relation to the publication of the 2020 electoral register, arising from the conduct of the annual canvass of electors. This is so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure the canvass is carried out in the safest way possible.

The electoral canvass is carried out every year and whilst registration of electors is a year round process, the canvass presents the opportunity for Electoral Registration Officers to ensure the accuracy of the register. The canvass conventionally begins on the 1 July each year and can take up to five months to complete. The canvass culminates in the publication of the revised electoral register on the 1 December of that year. The date for the publication of the register is set out in legislation and I intend to lay draft regulations which would allow Electoral Registration Officers to publish the 2020 electoral register at a later date if necessary, up to the 1 February 2021. This change would apply only to the publication of the 2020 electoral register.

I am of the view that in the current circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic there should be some flexibility for Electoral Registration Officers to carry out the canvass in a way which is commensurate with public health requirements and this can be achieved by moving the final date by which the 2020 electoral register must be published. This does not mean that registers may only be published on the 1 February 2021, Electoral Registration Officers may choose to publish on 1 December 2020 as usual or on any other date up to, and including, the 1 February 2021. Electoral Registration Officers would be free to commence work on the annual canvass in July as usual but will have more time available to them to ensure that appropriate arrangements to safely conduct the canvass can be put in place.

My intention is to lay the draft regulations, which will follow the draft affirmative procedure, before the summer recess and have written to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee today to inform the Committee of my intentions.