



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Electoral Reform White Paper

DATE 30 March 2023

BY Mick Antoniw MS - Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution

In July 2021 we published our framework for Electoral Reform, and last October I published a White Paper for consultation on detailed proposals for the modernisation of electoral administration in Wales. We received almost 150 responses to our consultation, and I am grateful to every individual and stakeholder organisation that shared their views on our ambition to improve democratic health.

Today I have published [a summary of the responses](#) received to that consultation and now set out the next steps on our journey to deliver this Government's commitment to reduce the democratic deficit in Wales and develop an electoral system fit for the 21st century.

We are building on what we have already achieved, including extending the franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds and qualifying foreign citizens in Wales and delivering a set of electoral innovations at the local elections last May that showed digital innovation can unlock more efficient and accessible elections without undermining integrity.

Respondents to our consultation expressed broad support for our ambitions set out in the White Paper. We will continue to work with stakeholders throughout this Senedd term as we progress our proposals and bring forward legislation in anticipation of the next major devolved elections in Wales in 2026 and 2027. We do so mindful of the views expressed about ensuring value for money, local authority capacity to deliver and the need to carefully manage differences between devolved and reserved elections – which should not be a brake on our modernisation agenda.

I would like to highlight some of the reforms we now intend to take forward:

- To simplify electoral registration, we will work with local authorities in Wales to design and pilot the automatic registration of electors for devolved elections.
- To strengthen electoral administration, we will establish an Electoral Management Board in line with the proposals in the White Paper.

- We will also take forward reforms to the processes for conducting community and electoral reviews and for the transfer of the functions of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.
- To build democratic health we will improve accessibility of devolved elections for disabled voters by placing duties on returning officers to provide equipment to help disabled people vote independently, according to Electoral Commission guidance.
- We will improve candidate safety by legislating to extend the scope of the offence of undue influence.

As we deliver these changes we will continue to work with stakeholders on our longer-term programme of electoral reform. In this longer-term programme of work, we will look to consolidate electoral law to improve clarity and accessibility, including by restating the franchise for devolved elections in one bilingual act.