

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: MA/JJ/1741/20

Mick Antoniw MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

16 June 2020

Dear Mick,

I want to inform you of my intention to lay draft regulations for approval by the Senedd, which would allow Electoral Registration Officers flexibility in relation to the publication of the revised 2020 electoral register arising from the conduct of the annual canvass of electors.

Electoral registration is a year round process and the annual canvass presents the opportunity for Electoral Registration Officers to contact households and ensure electoral registers are as complete as possible. The canvass can take up to five months to complete and can include a canvass visit to the property in some cases. Where registration activities are carried out alongside, this can also necessitate verification of identity via key paperwork such as sight of passports. The annual canvass conventionally begins on the 1 July each year, although this is not set out in legislation. The timetable is driven by the legislative requirement to publish the revised electoral register, as a consequence of conducting the annual canvas on the 1 December each year. Exceptionally, where an election is held between July and December during the period of the annual canvas, publication of the revised electoral register for that year must occur no later than the 1 February of the following year.

I intend to lay the draft regulations before summer recess which would allow Electoral Registration Officers more time to publish the 2020 electoral register up to the 1 February 2021 if necessary. This change will apply to the publication of the 2020 electoral register only.

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

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

extending the date by which the 2020 electoral register must be published. This does not mean that electoral registers may only be published on the 1 February 2021. Electoral Registration Officers may choose to publish their 2020 electoral register on 1 December 2020 as usual or on any other date up to, and including, the 1 February 2021.

The legislation will follow the draft affirmative procedure and I will be grateful for your consideration and report in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie James AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government