



# The Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Bill

## Response to the LGH Committee report (July 2025)

09/09/2025

In July 2025, Local Government and Housing Committee submitted its report on the Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Bill ("the Bill"), a Private Member's Bill. The report includes 2 recommendations. This is the Welsh Government's response to those recommendations

# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Response to the two recommendations .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Recommendation 1.....	4
Recommendation 2.....	4

## Introduction

- 1.** The Bill introduces provisions regarding absent voting for local government elections in Wales and Scotland, as well as elections to the Senedd Cymru and the Scottish Parliament.
- 2.** While the administration of Senedd and local elections is generally devolved, Schedule 7A of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (GoWA) explicitly reserves any digital service provided by a UK Minister for elector registration. Consequently, this reservation necessitates that the Bill grants Welsh Ministers designated powers to enact secondary legislation concerning access to the Online Absent Vote Application (OAVA) system via the UK Digital Service (UKDS) for both Senedd and local government elections.
- 3.** This Bill intends to empower the Welsh and Scottish Ministers to establish regulations permitting online applications for postal and proxy votes in devolved elections via OAVA. Additionally, it provides powers for both Governments to introduce secondary legislation to require identity verification for absent voting applications. Identity checks will be conducted upfront at the point of application, requiring applicants to provide their National Insurance number or alternative documentation if necessary.
- 4.** Furthermore, the Bill standardises renewal cycles for postal voting. Following changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022—for UK Parliament elections—postal voters must now reapply every three years, rather than refreshing their signature every five years. This Bill will harmonise renewal cycles for devolved elections with those reserved to the UK Parliament.

## Response to the two recommendations

### Recommendation 1

- 5.** The Committee recommends that the Cabinet Secretary should confirm whether the current ability to apply for postal and proxy votes in Welsh will be replicated in the Online Absent Voting Application system.
- 6. Response:** Accept
- 7.** The Welsh Government can confirm that the Online Absent Voting Application system is currently provided in Welsh throughout. All additional content provided for Senedd elections, and any future changes will also be provided in Welsh.

### Recommendation 2

- 8.** The Committee recommends the Senedd should grant its consent for the UK Government to legislate on the devolved matters of the Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Bill.
- 9. Response:** Noted
- 10.** The Welsh Government welcomes the committee's recommendation to the Senedd and is grateful for their consideration of the legislative consent memorandum.