

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



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Early voting pilots: evaluation report

We have today published our statutory [evaluation report](#) on the May 2022 local elections early voting pilots in Wales.

Four local authorities trialled early voting as part of the Welsh Government's [framework for electoral modernisation](#). Pilots took place in Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen at a variety of locations and times in the week before polling day on Thursday 5 May.

The pilots were well run by Returning Officers. There were no notable issues on the advance voting days or on Thursday 5 May and voters were satisfied with their experience of voting. However, the results indicate that the opportunity to vote in-person ahead of polling day does not, on its own, boost turnout significantly. This is not unexpected; we know that people's motivation to vote or not to vote is driven by several factors and is not solely linked to convenience or choice of method.

We cannot determine, from the evidence of the pilots, what impact advance voting, if introduced, would have on turnout over time. The experience of the pilots provides some useful information on how advance voting could work, although the small number of pilots means there is still work to do to develop future policy.

The report concludes that any proposed changes to voting processes should be designed to deliver a likely benefit to voters, maintain the security and integrity of the system, and be realistically deliverable by electoral administrators. Our evaluation has identified several specific areas that need to be addressed if a further roll out of advance voting is considered, including location, number and choice of advance voting days, costs, raising public awareness and ensuring resilience of electoral administration teams.

Elections Act: implementation

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has provided an update through its Business Change Network on recent decisions by Ministers relating to the

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Early voting pilots: evaluation report

Information on and a link to the Commission's statutory evaluation report on the early voting pilots which took place in parts of Wales at the May 2022 elections.

Elections Act: implementation

Update on plans for the implementation of changes introduced by the Elections Act.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

If there is a new RO/ERO appointment in your authority, please contact the team in Wales by e-mailing infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public task which has its basis in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will manage your personal

implementation of the voter ID measures in the Elections Act. DLUHC have confirmed their intention that the measures will apply to all relevant elections from May 2023, and that the application process for obtaining voter identification will go live in January 2023.

We understand and share the concerns that many across the electoral community have about the implementation timetable given delays to the secondary legislation and the lack of clarity this brings. We are committed to supporting the effective implementation of the voter ID provisions, but it remains vital that they are delivered in a way which ensures accessibility, security and workability. We have raised our concerns with officials and ministers, and have requested an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State.

We are continuing to develop our plans for how we will support you with preparing for and delivering the changes, but are still awaiting the detailed timings for and content of the secondary legislation from DLUHC that we need to be able to confirm what we can provide to you and when. We will update you as soon as we can.

In the meantime, we are working to develop some initial guidance to highlight key areas of planning that you can start to take forward now, even in the absence of the detail on how the provisions will operate in practice. Whilst there are no scheduled polls in May 2023 in Wales, this will still support you with making early preparations so you are ready for the first elections – scheduled or unscheduled – at which these new provisions will apply in your area. We expect to make this guidance available to you later this month.

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