# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Update on Flexible Voting Pilots** |
| **DATE** | **23 March 2022** |
| **BY** | **Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution** |

On 9 November 21, I published a written statement confirming the names of the four local authorities which had expressed an interest in delivering flexible voting pilots as part of the May 2022 local government elections.

The purpose of the pilots is to see if we can make it easier for people to vote by offering flexibility on when and where they can vote. The pilots will bring the ballot box closer to people’s day to day lives. They are a step in ensuring elections in Wales are as accessible as possible and that everyone who wants to vote can vote. The learning from the pilots will be used to inform longer term improvements to the way people vote and to help reduce the democratic deficit.

I am pleased to provide an update on progress in developing these pilots which will test different forms of advance voting.

Pilots will run in four areas:

***Blaenau Gwent*** *–* the centrally-located Ebbw Vale Learning Zone will be used as an advance polling station for all residents of the county, including students of the college who are eligible to vote at the elections. Advance voting will be available on the Tuesday and Wednesday before election day.

***Bridgend*** - polling stations in certain low turnout wards will be open for advance voting on the Tuesday and Wednesday before election day. A new advance polling station will also be created in a school on the Tuesday before election day for use by students registered at that school who are eligible to vote in specified wards.

***Caerphilly*** – the council offices at Ystrad Mynach will be used as an advance polling station for all residents of the county on the weekend before election day.

***Torfaen –*** the council offices at Pontypool will be used as an advance polling station for all residents of the county on the weekend before election day.

All four pilots have been developed in close collaboration between the local authorities, the Electoral Commission, the Welsh Government and the wider electoral community.

In accordance with section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000, we have also formally consulted with the Electoral Commission on the making of orders to implement the proposed pilots, and they support orders being made. The Minister for Finance and Local Government has therefore made four orders to implement the schemes outlined above, which will come into force on 23 March 2022. The orders can be accessed at:

[The County Borough of Caerphilly (Electoral Pilot Scheme) Order 2022 | GOV.WALES](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fcounty-borough-caerphilly-electoral-pilot-scheme-order-2022&data=04%7C01%7CLisa.Penny%40gov.wales%7C7cae3901bd384f164d8208da0cab9327%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637836228280958275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=7KNqhrsI%2FQSXUzrIaDTwL8NzmLKEIRUcrc%2F3r6XiW%2BU%3D&reserved=0)

[The County Borough of Bridgend (Electoral Pilot Scheme) Order 2022 | GOV.WALES](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fcounty-borough-bridgend-electoral-pilot-scheme-order-2022&data=04%7C01%7CLisa.Penny%40gov.wales%7C7cae3901bd384f164d8208da0cab9327%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637836228280958275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=sE4R3D3jIjBoJ%2Bx%2B7RS8WmdrdgiSuNHLZcUGFTjudAE%3D&reserved=0)

[The County Borough of Torfaen (Electoral Pilot Scheme) Order 2022 | GOV.WALES](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fcounty-borough-torfaen-electoral-pilot-scheme-order-2022&data=04%7C01%7CLisa.Penny%40gov.wales%7C7cae3901bd384f164d8208da0cab9327%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637836228280958275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=jyhoXKN8fd4JJtkVoHz0mgdwNp6DcjUylGKXF7FNJjs%3D&reserved=0)

[The County Borough of Blaenau Gwent (Electoral Pilot Scheme) Order 2022 | GOV.WALES](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fcounty-borough-blaenau-gwent-electoral-pilot-scheme-order-2022&data=04%7C01%7CLisa.Penny%40gov.wales%7C7cae3901bd384f164d8208da0cab9327%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637836228280958275%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=NT%2FQWHCqXK%2F%2B4a2WChXlflcSYBf6kkW%2Fk24S6i4L%2ByA%3D&reserved=0)

I look forward to continuing to work with local government and the electoral community in the lead up to the May 2022 elections and will keep members updated on progress.