

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO
THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (WELSH FORMS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER
2015

2015 No. 803

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Cabinet Office and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
2. **Purpose of the instrument**
 - 2.1 This instrument makes updates to the Welsh language versions of certain prescribed forms and forms of words to be used at UK Parliamentary elections in Wales.
3. **Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments**
 - 3.1 None.
4. **Legislative Context**
 - 4.1 The Parliamentary Elections (Welsh Forms) (Amendment) Order 2015 amends the Parliamentary Elections (Welsh Forms) Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/1014) which prescribes the Welsh versions of certain forms and forms of words which must be used at UK Parliamentary elections held in Wales. The English versions of these forms are provided for in the Appendix of Forms to Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983, and Schedule 3 to the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341). The Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/294) set out modifications of certain forms that have effect when a poll at a UK Parliamentary election is combined with a poll at another election or referendum. This Order updates certain forms and forms of words to be used at parliamentary elections in Wales following amendments to English versions of the forms made by the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Description of Electoral Registers and Amendment) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/3198), the Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/920) and the Representation of the People (Ballot Paper) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/656).
 - 4.2 The Order forms part of a group of instruments, the majority of which have been made, which contain provisions to improve the voting experience, and which also include provisions to update ballot papers and other forms used by voters.
5. **Territorial Extent and Application**
 - 5.1 This instrument applies to Wales.
6. **European Convention on Human Rights**

- 6.1 As the instrument is not subject to any parliamentary procedure after being laid and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

- 7.1 The Government has undertaken a programme of work to make improvements to the design of ballot papers and other forms used by voters at elections. The changes are being made following widespread consultation involving a programme of public user-testing and are designed to make the ballot paper and forms clearer and easier to use, and so facilitate electors' engagement with the voting process.
- 7.2 As a consequence, a number of changes were made to the forms and forms of words by the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Description of Electoral Registers and Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and the Representation of the People (Ballot Paper) Regulations 2015. The Order provides Welsh translations of these forms and forms of words for use at UK parliamentary elections in Wales, and ensures that the Welsh versions are consistent with the current English versions. The Order also makes a number of minor amendments to update statutory references.
- 7.3 These changes will apply at future UK Parliamentary elections in Wales, including the UK Parliamentary general election on 7 May 2015.
- 7.4 Changes being made to the forms include:
- Postal Voting Statement – greater prominence given to the requirement for postal voters to provide personal identifiers, i.e. date of birth and signature, with emphasis on the fact that these will be checked against those held on file; and a reminder to the voter to check that these have been completed is also included on the revised form.
 - Poll card - clearer and stronger emphasis given to the type and date of the election; and clear guidance on what to do if the elector is unexpectedly unable to vote in person.

8. Consultation outcome

- 8.1 The Cabinet Office has consulted with the Electoral Commission on the Order and the Electoral Commission is content with the Welsh forms contained within the Order.
- 8.2 The Order prescribes Welsh versions of the revised forms, notices and forms of words in the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Description of Electoral Registers and Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and the Representation of the People (Ballot Paper) Regulations 2015. The forms in those instruments were developed in consultation with the Electoral Commission together with other leading electoral stakeholders such as the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), and also with election software and printing suppliers and SCOPE. Further, draft versions of election material have been subject to a full programme of public user-testing in a variety

of geographical locations (including sessions in Wales) and amongst a broad cross-section of the general public. These included those for whom English is not their first language, individuals with low literacy levels, and in the case of bilingual material for use in elections held in Wales, a group of Welsh speakers.

- 8.3 The response to both the public user-testing and the wider consultation has been supportive of the proposed new designs which are seen as an improvement on the current forms and will help to make it easier for electors to cast their vote.

9. Guidance

- 9.1 No specific guidance will be issued because the use of the forms is self-explanatory.

10. Impact

- 10.1 There is no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.
- 10.2 There is no impact on the public sector.
- 10.3 A separate full regulatory impact assessment has not been prepared for this instrument because no impact on the private, public or voluntary sectors is foreseen.

11. Regulating small business

- 11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring & review

- 12.1 The Cabinet Office keeps all electoral legislation under review to ensure it continues to support electors' participation in elections and effective electoral administration.

13. Contact

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