Looking back at the May 2022 elections | Electoral Commission Search Looking back at the May 2022 elections Posted: 21 September 2022 Written by: Rachel Stephenson, Policy Adviser Summary On 5 May voters in all four parts of the UK headed to the polls, with local government elections in Scotland, Wales and England , and elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly . Following the polls, we gather and analyse evidence on how they went. Today, we publish reports on our findings for these elections. So, what did we find about how the elections were run, how voters and campaigners found taking part, and what lessons can be learned for the future? Voter experience The response from voters was overwhelmingly positive. Our research shows that most people across the UK thought the elections in May were well-run. There were very high levels of satisfaction with the process of voting, with 95% of voters in Northern Ireland and Wales, 96% in England and 97% in Scotland saying that they were satisfied. These figures are consistent with what we found in recent comparable elections. We also found that almost all voters across the UK said that they found it easy to fill in their ballot paper, with 95% of voters in Scotland, 97% in England and Wales, and 98% in Northern Ireland saying they found it easy. However, in all reports, we highlight some areas where further work could be done to lower barriers to access and improve voters' understanding and awareness. experience Candidates and campaigners responding to our surveys told us they felt able to communicate effectively with voters and that, as part of their campaigns, they used a variety of methods including printed materials, social media and canvassing. Overall, there were no widespread campaigning problems. However, many candidates told us that they experienced some kind of a problem with threats, abuse or intimidation during the elections (rating this as a 2 or higher on a 1-5 scale), although the extent and scale of the concerns differed across the four parts of the UK. Robust debate is an essential feature of election campaigns, but this must not lead to threats, abuse or intimidation that discourage candidates from standing for election or campaigning. We will work with the UK's governments and the wider electoral community to understand what is driving candidate abuse and intimidation, and to ensure this issue is addressed as a matter of urgency. Delivering the elections And finally, let's look at those that make elections happen. Overall the elections across the UK were well run, with only a small number of isolated administration issues. However, the capacity and resilience of electoral administration teams remains a significant concern. Staffing and booking venues was a difficulty in some areas and in Wales the high recent turnover of Returning Officers created challenges. We also found that the late introduction of new legislation in Wales and the late confirmation of the approach for Covid-19 in Northern Ireland impacted on administrators' ability to effectively plan for the elections. Early clarity on legislation is essential to allow Returning Officers and their teams enough time to plan for elections, and we continue to recommend that legislation is clear six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by those that run elections. Looking ahead, given the range and scope of changes introduced by the Elections Act, effective implementation will depend on the timely development and introduction of detailed legislation. The UK Government should make sure policies are introduced with proper funding and enough time for necessary planning and preparations. Early clarity and certainty will be crucial to make sure electoral administrators can plan and prepare to deliver wellrun elections in the coming years.