

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective | Electoral Commission Search

6. Making sure electoral law is fair and effective You are in the Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 section Home Our plans and priorities Corporate plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 On this page Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments Focus on Wales and on England Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system First published: 25 April 2022 Last updated: 25 April 2022 Summary Our electoral system is underpinned by a legal framework which establishes how elections are delivered. It sets out who is allowed to vote and the various ways they can cast their vote. It sets out who can stand for elections, who can campaign, and how much they can spend. And it sets out how electoral administrators should deliver elections, including counting and declaring the results. Given its cross cutting impact, we want to work with parliamentarians and governments to improve electoral law so that it is fit for purpose, reduces complexity, inefficiencies and risk, and enables innovation. We will work with others to reform electoral law by: supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system Supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments We will continue to scrutinise new electoral legislation and provide expert briefings to governments and parliaments on legislative proposals. We will focus on providing an evidence-based analysis of any proposed changes to electoral law, to support informed consideration of any changes. We will also work to support effective implementation of any new legislation, ensuring that voters, electoral administrators and campaigners understand what it means for them in each case. Focus on Wales and England Focus on Wales: Electoral reform We will work closely with the Welsh Government and the Senedd as they develop legislation for Welsh elections. This may include reform ahead of the next local government elections in May 2022, a wider local government elections Bill and reform of Senedd elections ahead of the 2026 polls. We will provide advice on the practical implementation of proposals which reflect the views of the electoral community. Through our role in designing forms and our public awareness activity, we will also play a key role in implementing any changes, such as making the postal voting system more accessible. We also expect to play a key role in evaluating and publishing a report on the piloting of any reform measures, which may include early voting centres, mobile polling stations and voting in educational establishments. Focus on England: Developing capacity to support implementation of change We will continue to work with partners across the electoral community to develop and implement solutions to support local authorities to increase the capacity and resilience of their electoral services functions. This will not only help to manage the existing known risks to the delivery of well-run elections, but will also provide a firm foundation for the effective implementation of changes to electoral law. A key focus will be the development of a toolkit to support local authorities with designing and reviewing their electoral services functions, ensuring they have the skills, resources and processes that they need. Engaging with governments' current electoral law reform agendas, while continuing to make the case for further reform There is an urgent need for governments to simplify and modernise electoral law. It

is increasingly complex, which is not just a technical or legal problem. There are real costs and consequences for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators, as well as for the regulators and enforcement bodies which struggle to uphold and enforce the law. The UK's Law Commissions have produced a blueprint for simplified and modernised electoral law, which is supported by us, parliamentary select committees, electoral administrators, electoral lawyers and academics. We will continue to make the case for the implementation of this electoral law reform, while supporting parliamentarians and governments with reform when it happens. Continuing to provide expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system. We want to maintain high levels of public confidence in the electoral process, including perceptions of the legitimacy of the results. We will continue to research public attitudes to understand how the electoral system could be improved to meet voters' needs. We will also continue to conduct research on the delivery of and participation in elections and referendums, and use this research to identify reforms to electoral law and process that would improve them. We will continue to support governments to successfully implement changes to electoral law, and will provide evidence-based recommendations, expertise and practical advice. Technological advances in digital campaigning bring new challenges, and we know that lack of transparency is already a concern for voters. Results from our 2021 public opinion tracking survey show that 37% of people disagree that they can find out who has produced the political information they see online. And, 40% are concerned about how or why online political adverts are targeted at them. We will therefore continue support to governments to implement our recommendations on digital campaigning, while encouraging further improvements.

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