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download our full report , written by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Elections  
Centre, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth, PL4 8AA). Summary The UK  
electorate at the 2015 general election was almost 46.4 million –the largest ever.  
The registers contained three-quarters of a million more names than in 2010 –an  
increase of 1.7%. More than a million people registered to vote in the period between  
the compilation of the ONS parliamentary electorate statistics based on the registers  
at 1st December 2014 and the general election in May. Nearly 30.7 million valid votes  
were cast, making the overall turnout across the UK 66.2%. This is one million more  
votes than in 2010, but only a 1.1 percentage point higher turnout. The ‘ballot box’  
turnout which includes votes rejected at the count was 30.8 million or 66.4% of the  
registered electorate. Turnout rose in each country, but jumped particularly sharply  
in Scotland from 63.9% in 2010 to 71.1%. The number of ballot papers rejected at the  
count continues to be but a small fraction of the total cast (0.33%), though was a  
little greater than in either 2010 or 2005. There is evidence of the rejection rate  
being somewhat higher where voters are faced with an additional election, especially  
in cases where it operates under a different electoral system (e.g. in those areas  
with a coincident mayoral election). Almost 7.6 million postal votes were issued  
-16.4% of the entire electorate. This represented an increase of 1.1 percentage  
points and more than half a million more voters than in 2010. 85.8% of those with a  
postal ballot returned it. By way of contrast, only 63.2% of those electors required  
to vote ‘in person’ did so. The number of postal votes at the count was one in five  
of the total. In the North East region of England more than a third of all votes were  
cast by post. The proportion of postal votes rejected or otherwise not included in  
the count was 3.3%. It was less than in 2010 in every country of the UK. In about  
half the cases postal votes were rejected because a signature or date of birth (or  
both) were mismatched; in another quarter because the elector omitted to enclose  
either the ballot paper or the postal vote statement (or both). Almost 150,000  
electors (0.3% of the total) appointed proxies. This was a small increase compared  
with 2010, concentrated especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The number of  
emergency proxy votes increased from fewer than 1,000 in 2010 to nearly 9,000  
following a relaxation of the rules regarding eligibility. About three fifths of one  
percent of electors with a postal vote were granted a waiver to use their date of  
birth as their sole identifier. This is in line with levels seen at the 2014 European  
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