

A strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission | Electoral Commission Search

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A strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission You are in the Elections Act section Home Elections Act On this page Changes proposed by the government Our view Further reading First published: 5 July 2021 Last updated: 5 July 2021 Last updated These are the views we set out to parliamentarians before the Elections Act became law. We last updated these views in early 2022. Changes proposed by the government The UK Government is proposing the introduction of a strategy and policy statement for the Electoral Commission. The statement would set out the UK Government's priorities for electoral matters, and give us strategic direction. It would be approved by the UK Parliament, following statutory consultation. Our view The introduction of a Strategy and Policy Statement which enables the government to set the strategic direction for the work of the Commission is not consistent with the role that an independent Commission plays in a healthy democracy. This independence is fundamental to maintaining confidence in our electoral system. The provisions in the Bill would give current or future UK governments the power to direct our work, and may lead the public and campaigners to believe there had been political interference in the way we operate. This could affect the way we work to ensure parties and campaigners are following the political finance laws. It could also affect the advice and guidance we provide to electoral administrators, parties and campaigners, and the UK's parliaments. Our independent role in the electoral system must be clear for voters and campaigners to see and must be protected in electoral law. This underpins fairness and trust in the electoral system, and cross party confidence in the Commission. If these provisions are not removed, ministers from one party would be allowed to shape how electoral law is applied to them and their political competitors. In addition to the UK Parliament, we are accountable to and funded by the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. While devolved matters may be removed from the strategy and policy statement, it remains likely to affect how the Commission delivers some devolved functions, for instance in terms of resourcing. It will also affect the Commission's core functions, which benefit voters, parties, campaigners and electoral administrators in Wales and Scotland. It therefore remains important that, if the proposed strategy and policy statement is brought into law, the processes for development, consultation and approval reflect the shared accountability relationships with the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. Further reading Further reading The Government's Written Ministerial Statement: Increasing Parliamentary Accountability in Electoral Policy Related content Elections Act about the UK Government's Elections Act and what it means for voting and campaigning About the Elections Act about the Elections Bill, including the measures it contains and which elections it applies to. The Electoral Commission's ability to bring prosecutions about the proposal that would stop us from being able to bring prosecutions against those who break electoral law relating to parties and campaigners. Changes to legal requirements for parties and non-party campaigners about proposals to change the law affecting parties and non-party campaigners.