

Urgent reforms needed to get millions of people registered to vote | Electoral Commission Search Urgent reforms needed to get millions of people registered to vote You are in the section Home Posted: 18 September 2023 Intro Up to 8 million people across the United Kingdom are either incorrectly registered to vote or missing completely, according to research published today by the Electoral Commission. This is more than the combined adult population of Scotland and Wales, and would be equivalent in number to more than 100 UK Parliament constituencies. The research found that young people, private renters and those who have recently moved house continue to be less likely to be correctly registered to vote. The current electoral registration system does not work well for voters or those who run elections, and urgent reforms are needed so that public data can be used to facilitate voter registration, particularly for those less likely to be correctly registered. The Commission is calling on the UK's governments to pass legislation to create clear legal gateways for government departments and public bodies to share data on potentially eligible voters with electoral administrators. This would enable electoral registration officers to register voters directly, or to send them invitations to register. Craig Westwood, Director of Communications, Policy and Research, said: "Millions of people across the UK are not correctly registered to vote. While some may not want to participate in elections, for many people it is a consequence of an outdated registration system that disproportionately affects private renters and young people. "Without action, we'll continue to see large numbers of people unable to take part in elections. The electoral community needs a clear plan to ensure that electoral registration processes are modernised so that people are registered and able to exercise their right to vote. As part of this plan, governments will need to pass legislation to enable data to be shared with electoral administrators. "We stand ready to work with the UK's governments and electoral administrators to improve the system and make sure as many people as possible are registered to vote." In addition to improving the experience for voters, these changes would address the current burdens faced by electoral administrators, who are currently required to use their limited resources and capacity at the most critical time ahead of major elections to manage high numbers of applications to register to vote. The full report shows the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers across the UK, including breakdowns by country, age and gender. It also sets out a range of options for how specific data sources could be used to improve the system. Ends For more information contact the Electoral Commission press office on 020 7271 0704, out of office hours 07789 920 414 or press@electoralcommission.org.uk Notes to eds Notes to editors by: enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK, Welsh and Scottish parliaments. The Commission runs accuracy and completeness studies to measure the quality of the electoral registers. The last time we carried out this research was in 2019, on the 2018 electoral registers. The Commission plays an important part in addressing under-registration through our continuing public awareness campaigning work, which we update regularly to ensure we are in-line with the latest insights about both voter attitudes and the demographic patterns of under-registered groups. Fieldwork and data analysis was carried out by Ipsos on behalf of The Electoral Commission based on the

December 2022 Electoral Registers. Fieldwork was conducted between 11 January and 19 May 2023. A total of 5,298 interviews were achieved across 127 local authority areas in Great Britain, and 1,015 interviews in 100 wards in Northern Ireland. Estimates are based on the local government registers and within a margin of error of 1.1% in Great Britain and 1.9% in Northern Ireland. This means between 6.7 – 7.8 million eligible voters were incorrectly registered or missing from the register in Great Britain and between 228,000 – 283,000 in Northern Ireland. These estimates are based on incompleteness figures from the survey. They include the proportion of eligible residents who are currently not included on the register at their current address (e.g., the surveyed address) and entries found containing errors which would prevent an eligible elector from casting their vote (e.g., incorrect name or a recorded date of birth which is later than an attainer's birthday). Elections are scheduled to take place across all of England and Wales in May 2024, including in London and Birmingham where there were not elections in May 2023. A UK Parliamentary general election must also take place before the end of January 2025. Everyone must be registered to vote in order to take part in elections. Related content [Our Commissioners](#) [Donations and loans](#) [Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation](#) [Our Executive Team](#) [Meet our Executive Team](#), and find out more about them [Donations accepted](#) [View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners](#)