

Significant changes proposed to UK elections – Electoral Commission responds | Electoral Commission Search Significant changes proposed to UK elections – Electoral Commission responds You are in the section Home Posted: 5 July 2021 Significant changes proposed to UK elections – Electoral Commission responds The Electoral Commission has responded to a new Elections Bill, published today by the UK Government. The Bill proposes significant changes to the rules for elections in the UK, and will affect voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. Its measures include a requirement for voters at polling stations to show photo ID before they receive their ballot paper; extending imprint rules to digital material; and removing the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas. Commenting on the Bill, Craig Westwood, Director of Communication, Policy and Research at the Electoral Commission, said: “The Elections Bill seeks to tackle a range of issues relating to the security, accessibility and transparency of elections and campaigning. It represents a strong commitment from the UK Government to modernising our electoral system and addressing areas that need improvement. “Introducing digital imprint rules is a particularly positive and welcome step. Giving voters information about who is trying to reach them should help boost public confidence in online campaigning.” The changes in the Bill would apply to UK Parliament elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales, and local elections in England. Some provisions would apply to Northern Ireland Assembly elections and local elections in Northern Ireland. We will provide independent advice to parliamentarians on the contents of the Bill, based on published evidence and our expertise. We will also be publishing our views. Commenting on implementing the changes, Craig Westwood added: “The laws around elections are already complex and fragmented, so introducing new requirements can add additional risk. Changes will need to be well planned, with implementation phased and properly funded, to ensure that electoral administrators, and others involved in running elections, can deliver the changes as intended. “Each of the UK’s governments can decide the laws that apply at the elections for which they are responsible. When their approaches diverge, consideration must be given to the bearing that has on how the system as a whole works and ensuring that everyone can understand what rules are in place at different elections. “The Commission will work with voters, electoral administrators, parties and campaigners to help them understand and prepare in good time for the new rules.” A summary of the Commission’s view on each of the Bill’s measures can be found on its website. 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 editors 1. 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 2. The Commission reports to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments. 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