

Overview This report provides an overview of our work on devolved matters in Scotland and looks at our performance during the last year. We have included summary financial

information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial

statements, where more detail is available. The Political Parties, Elections and

Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and are directly accountable to the Scottish, Welsh and UK parliaments.

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 sets out the funding and accountability arrangements for the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in Scotland. Partner

organisation Excellent partnership working which allowed us to get timely and

accurate information out about voter registration, postal voting, voting itself and

emergency measures due to Covid. Partner organisation Work done to achieve our aims

Working with the Electoral Management Board in Scotland to provide guidance and

advice to electoral administrators in Scotland to support them in preparing for and

delivering the polls. This included new resources created in partnership with

disabled people for use in the training of polling station staff. Providing targeted

support to political parties and candidates to ensure that they were able to

understand and comply with the campaign rules. This included running candidate

seminars at political party conferences and a candidate and agent webinar attended by

over 180 people. Running a public awareness campaign for voters, reminding them of

the key deadlines for registration and absent vote applications and providing

information on how to complete the ballot paper using the single transferable vote.

There were 66,716 applications made to register to vote in Scotland during the course

of our voter registration campaign. Working in partnership with civil society

organisations, such as Enable and Simon Community Scotland, to help people from

under-registered groups get ready to vote by sharing resources and running

information events. Providing a public information service for voters, including a

look-up tool to provide information about their allocated polling station and

candidates standing in their ward. Publishing our statutory report on the Scottish

council elections in September, including reporting on the steps Returning Officers

took to support disabled people's access to the elections. Our report drew on robust

research with voters, electoral administrators and candidates and found that the vast

majority of voters were satisfied with the process of voting and almost all were able

to use their preferred method of voting. We have invested in our advice, support and

regulatory activity in Scotland and increased staff resource to focus on these areas.

Our work has included: Consulting administrators in Scotland on a new performance

standards framework for Returning Officers, which has now been laid in the Scottish

Parliament. Using our performance standards frameworks to support and challenge

Returning Officers at the Scottish council elections and Electoral Registration

Officers on their year round activities to maintain accurate and complete electoral

registers. Identifying new opportunities to provide support to the regulated

community to help them comply with the rules around campaign finance. We continue to

provide expert advice to the Scottish Government and Parliament on policy development

within the electoral framework: Giving evidence to the Standards, Procedures and

Public Appointments Committee on the conduct of the 2022 Scottish council elections,

including highlighting areas where the system can be improved for voters, electoral

administrators and campaigners. Providing a comprehensive response to the Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform, drawing on our policy work and wide-ranging research with voters, electoral administrators and campaigners. Throughout the last year, we have continued to build on the success of our work to promote democratic education by providing learning resources for teachers and youth workers: Our previous education work has focused on supporting young people to get ready to vote in a particular election, but our Welcome to Your Vote Week campaign in January 2023 marked a shift towards the Commission highlighting the importance of embedding democratic education in schools year-round. Our campaign engaged over 150 schools and youth organisations across Scotland who signed up to run activity with the young people they work with on the theme of 'Our Democracy'. We also worked with the Scottish Youth Parliament and Girlguiding Scotland to support young volunteers to run workshops in their schools and local communities, and ran events in schools throughout the week for around 700 young people. We piloted a youth voice programme, bringing together a group of young people from across Scotland to provide feedback on our education resources and create new youth-friendly resources. Candidate at May 2022 elections I found the webinar very effective particularly about the rules governing imprints, candidate spend and donations. I have recommended it to my fellow candidates and agents and will be sharing the link to it with them. Candidate at May 2022 elections Ongoing and future work In the next year we will work to establish a long-term youth voice programme. We will work to further embed democratic education in schools and youth work settings by supporting youth workers, teachers of PSE (Personal and Social Education) and other subjects to use our resources through teacher networks and training. We will also explore how we can work with public sector and civil society organisations to support care experienced young people and BSL users to learn about their vote. We will lead a project, drawing in stakeholders from amongst those administering Scottish council elections and those who campaign in these elections, to identify strategies for improving voter understanding of the single transferable vote system, with the aim of lowering the level of rejected ballots at Scottish council elections. We will continue to provide expert advice to the Scottish Government and Parliament as the Government takes forward its commitment to legislate for further electoral reform. Through advice, training and briefing sessions, we will support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent. We will work with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland to support Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers to help them meet the challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services which continue to meet voters' needs. This will include identifying opportunities to strengthen the resilience of electoral administration teams and exploring options for modernising the voting process. We will work with Police Scotland, campaigners and electoral administrators to explore and address concerns raised by candidates about intimidation and abuse at elections. Commitment to EDI The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Scotland and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our programme of partnership work in Scotland has continued to develop resources to support democratic inclusion for those who experience particular barriers to voting. This has included providing material in a variety of languages, including British Sign Language, and in a number of formats including Easy read, large print, audio and braille. We have also worked with partner organisations in Scotland to develop appropriate materials for Gypsy/Travellers, care experienced young people, domestic abuse survivors and people experiencing homelessness. In the year ahead we will be working closely with representatives from

the electoral community through the EMB Improvement subgroup to explore how we can improve the accessibility of the electoral process for people who experience barriers to participating in elections. Resources During 2022/23 we utilised 99% of £2.06m of budget available. This was predominately staffing £1.5m (73%) with advertising and research £0.5m (24%); the remaining amounts represent the Scottish Parliament contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. Our segmental reporting on page 152 shows the breakdown between direct and indirect costs. Governance The Commission reports to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) for accountability purposes. We continue to report to other committees for our work in different policy areas, most notably the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. In September 2022, we submitted our third estimate to the SPCB for the funding of our work in the year 2023/24. The process for developing the estimate followed the 'Statement of Funding Principles' which we agreed in early 2021 with both the Scottish and UK Parliaments along with the Senedd. Navigation Previous Wales annual report