

Objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context | Electoral Commission Search Objectives for well-run elections in the current public health context You are in the Upcoming elections section Home Upcoming elections On this page Voters Candidates and campaigners Electoral administrators First published: 14 October 2020 Last updated: 17 February 2022 2021 elections Elections held in the coming months, including the important sets of polls scheduled for May 2021, are likely to be delivered against the backdrop of evolving public health restrictions. These will present complex new challenges for all involved in the electoral process. Objectives We have worked with and consulted electoral administrators, political parties and governments across Great Britain to identify a shared set of high-level objectives for delivering successful elections in the current public health environment. We encourage all those involved in supporting and delivering the elections to use these objectives: to assess and test policy options and implementation approaches to identify and manage significant risks to successful delivery of the elections to inform research, analysis and reporting on the polls Objectives for successful elections in the current public health context Voters should be able to participate in the polls safely and confidently, and campaigners and parties should be able to put their case to the electorate. Voter objectives Voters There should be reasonable voting options available to all electors that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to them, or transmission by them to others. This should ideally include realistic voting options for people whose circumstances change at short notice close to polling day (for example, because of local lockdown requirements, or isolation by people or households with symptoms). This should also ensure that voters who may be especially vulnerable to the virus have opportunities to vote in a way which reduces the risk to their health. Within and across areas holding the same type of election, voters should be entitled to access the same voting methods and information regardless of where they live. Voters with disabilities should still be able to access the level of support they need and are currently entitled to receive in order to be able to vote with confidence. Voters should have clear and comprehensive information in advance about the options available, to help them plan how to vote safely. Applying to vote remotely (by post or by appointing a proxy) should be simple and accessible for all electors. Voters should have clear, accessible and comprehensive information to help them understand how to vote using their chosen method, particularly for those who are voting using that method for the first time. Candidates and campaigner objectives in detail Candidates and campaigners should have clarity about how the elections will be run and regulated, sufficiently far in advance of polling day and any regulated campaign periods to be able to put in place appropriate plans. Those who wish to stand for election should have access to reasonable options for completing and submitting the necessary nomination papers that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to or by them. It should be possible for campaigners to put their arguments and give information to voters during the period before polling day in ways that minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to or by them. Candidates, agents and parties should have a widespread understanding and acceptance of any changes to the administrative process necessitated by the public health situation. Electoral administrator objectives in detail Electoral administrators EROs and ROs should have clarity about how the elections should be run, sufficiently far in advance of polling day to be able to put in place appropriate plans. Election processes should be practically manageable and deliverable by EROs, ROs, electoral administrators and their suppliers, and appropriately resourced – particularly for any new or changed

processes introduced at relatively short notice. Any new or changed election processes should not reduce/undermine existing procedures for safeguarding electoral integrity, including where candidates, agents and others are entitled to observe election processes. It should be possible to put in place appropriate protections for electoral administration staff (including physical distancing measures or protective equipment, for example) in key public environments, particularly at polling stations, at postal vote opening sessions and count venues. Related content [Past elections and referendums](#) [Read our reports and view data about past elections and referendums](#) [Observing elections and referendums](#) [Find out about observing elections and referendums](#) [What we do in elections](#) [about what we do in elections](#) [What we do in referendums](#) [about what we do in referendums](#)